Sermons in Candles

C. H. Spurgeon

Central BAPTIST
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

presented by

J. B. CALVERT

KANSAS CITY, KANSAS

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SERMONS IN CANDLES:

TWO LECTURES

UPON THE

ILLUSTRATIONS WHICH MAY BE FOUND IN COMMON CANDLES.

BY

REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

REV. R. S. MACARTHUR, D. D.

"The bright shining of a candle doth give thee light." LUKE 11:36.

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AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,

~~150 NASSAU STREET~~, NEW YORK CITY.

1891

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INTRODUCTION.

THIS little volume by Rev. Charles H. Spurgeon charmingly discusses the illustrations which may be found in common candles. We congratulate the American publishers on the service which they render in publishing this little book; and we congratulate all its readers on the privilege they will enjoy in studying its pages. Truly the versatility of Mr. Spurgeon is marvellous; he is daily and hourly "anointed with fresh oil." This is certainly one of the most charming and instructive of the many volumes which he has written. He tells us delightfully in the opening pages how the idea of this lecture was suggested. The little volume gives us striking proofs of his wide reading, his knowledge of history, his practical philosophy, and his ever-present religious purpose. He shows us how much of candle-light there is in the Holy Scriptures, and in so doing he mingles exegesis and exhortation in wise proportions. Most helpful are his remarks on candles in emblems, on candles lighting other candles, on different kinds of candles and candlesticks, on candles in lanterns, on candles under bushels, on candles that sputter, on candles

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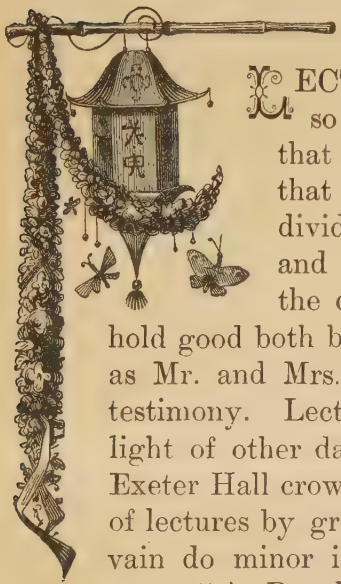
that are protected, on candles that are extinguished, on candles that burn at both ends, on candles that unite with other candles, on candles that are short, and candles that are long, and still other kinds of candles. The illustrations in the little book are illustrations in truth; it is a volume that can be read in a few hours, but which will occupy the thought and stimulate the heart for days. It will delight the young as they gather about the reader under the light of chandelier, lamp, or candle; and it will give instruction and comfort to the most experienced saint. It will furnish illustrations to the Sunday-school teacher and to the pulpit expounder; it has warmed my own heart, and has illumined for me many passages of Scripture and incidents of history. Wonderful man is this Spurgeon! May God continue to have him in His holy keeping, making every product of his pen, even like the Bible itself, a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path.

R. S. MacARTHUR.

CALVARY CHURCH.
NEW YORK, January 24, 1891.

Sermons in Candles.

Lecture No. 1.



LECTURING was once so common an exercise, that I have heard it said that all society might be divided into "Lecturers and the Lectured"; and the division was said to hold good both by night and by day; as Mr. and Mrs. Caudle could bear testimony. Lectures are now "the light of other days." No longer is Exeter Hall crowded to hear a series of lectures by great divines; and in vain do minor institutions invite an audience to "A Popular Lecture." The magic spell has departed: the lectured ones are delivered. Who is responsible for the falling off in attendance at lectures? Did

the talk become too dreary? Were the prelections too abstruse or too common-place? Will mine be like them?

I am not an adept at lecturing, and when I take to it under constraint, I either signally fail in it, or else the successful production is a sermon in disguise. You cannot drive out nature by command: the old pulpit hand must preach, even though you bid him do somewhat else. It would be no good sign if it were otherwise; for a man must keep to one thing, and be absorbed in it, or he will not do it well. I have preached now for so many years, that use is second nature; and a lecture, a speech, an address, and I fear even a conversation, all have a tendency to mould themselves sermon-fashion. It is just the old story over again of the artist who had been painting red lions all his life. The landlord of a public-house in a certain street desired to have his establishment known as "The Angel", and he commissioned the clever gentleman of the brush to produce one of those flaming spirits. The budding Academician replied, "You had better have a red lion. I can paint red lions against any man, and they seem the right sign for publicans

who do a roaring trade." "But", said Boniface, "there are three of your red lions quite handy already, and we want a little variety. I have made up my mind to have an angel. Cannot you arrange it?" "Well", said the artist, "I will see what I can do. You shall have your angel, but it will be awfully like a red lion." So, when I am requested to "lecture", I reply, "I cannot manage it; my business is to preach." But if they press their suit, and I am weak enough to yield, I warn them that my lecture will be wonderfully like a sermon.

I suppose "a lecture" signifies a *reading;* but enough of my brethren use manuscripts, and I will not compete with them. If I cannot speak extemporaneously, I will hold my tongue: to read I am ashamed.

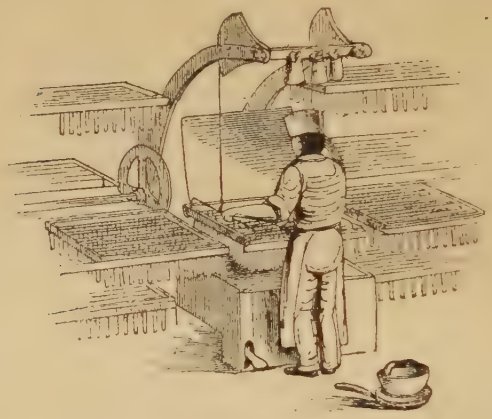
In a lecture one has the advantage of more freedom than in a sermon. One is permitted to take a wider range of subjects, and to use an easier style than a theological discourse allows. I will use this freedom, but my aim will be the same as if I were preaching. I trust my lecture may possibly impress some minds to whom a sermon would seem too dull a business. By calling this

lecture "Sermons in Candles", I claim the right to mingle the severe with the lively, the grave with the gay. In due proportions the mixture may be taken with good effect.

This is how the lecture came about in the first place. It has grown considerably since it was born, as all lively children do. In addressing my students in the College long ago, I was urging upon them the duty and necessity of using plenty of illustrations in their preaching, that they might be both interesting and instructive. I reminded them that the Saviour had many *likes* in his discourses. He said, over and over again, "The kingdom of heaven is LIKE"; "The kingdom of heaven is LIKE." "Without a parable spake he not unto them." The common people heard him gladly, because he was full of emblem and simile. A sermon without illustrations is like a room without windows. One student remarked that the difficulty was to get illustrations in any great abundance. "Yes", I said, "if you do not wake up, but go through the world asleep, you cannot see illustrations; but if your minds were thoroughly aroused, and yet you

could see nothing else in the world but a single tallow candle, you might find enough illustrations in that luminary to last you for six months." Now, the young brethren in the College are too well behaved to say "Oh!" or give a groan of unbelief, should I perchance say a strong thing; but they *look*, and they draw their breath, and they wait for an explanation. I understand what they mean, and do not make too heavy a draft upon their faith by long delays in explaining myself. The men who were around me at that particular moment thought that I had made rather a sweeping assertion, and their countenances showed it. "Well", I said, "I will prove my words;" and my attempt to prove them produced the rudiments of this lecture.

To the nucleus thus obtained, other things have been added as the address has been repeated. The lecture is a cairn, upon which stone after stone has been thrown, till it has become a heap, in fact, two heaps. To use a figure from the subject itself—my candles have been dipped again and again, and each time they have grown in bulk, till I now feel that they are ready to go from the makers to the consumers. The matter has been moulded

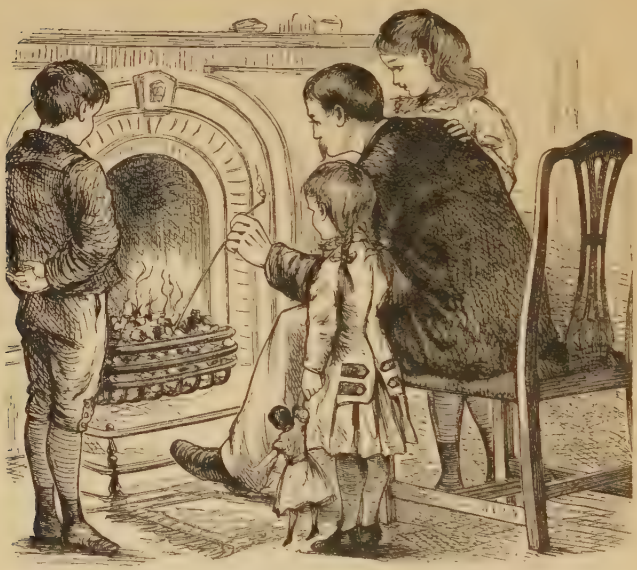


under my own hand, but at the same time the materials are so various, that whether my candle is a dip, or a mould, or a composite, I leave to you to decide.

This lecture of mine has proved a boon to several other public instructors, who have largely used it, and possibly have improved upon the original. I am sure they have not been more free than welcome. As I have taken out no letters-patent, I have never called upon them for a royalty for the use of my invention. Still, if their consciences trouble them, I am like Matthew, "at the receipt of custom." I have now resolved to print my lecture; and I hope those gentlemen

will not be angry with me for stopping their borrowing, but the rather I trust they will think me generous for having refrained from publishing the lecture for so long a period as five-and-twenty years. These candles have now become "ancient lights", but I do not propose to prevent anybody's building near the premises; for they will not block up my light. These symbols have light in themselves which cannot be hid. My friends can go on delivering their own versions all the same; and if they think fit, they may use the original text also. A man who would deliver the lecture, and sell the book at the close, might drive a good trade. In any case, the subject admits of further variations, and it can never be quite exhausted so long as lecturers have brains, and lectured ones have eyes.

Candles were far more familiar objects in my boyhood than in these days of gas and electricity. Now, fathers show their boys and girls how to make gas at the end of a tobacco pipe; but in my time the greatest of wonders was a lucifer-match. Our lights were so few that they justified the wit who declared that the word "luxury" was derived from *lux*, the Latin for light. Assuredly, a



good light is a high form of luxury. I can never forget the rushlight, which dimly illuminated the sitting-room of the old house; nor the dips, which were pretty fair when there were not too many of them to the pound; nor the mould candles, which came out only when there was a party, or some special personage was expected. Short sixes were very respectable specimens of household lights. Composites have never seemed to me to be so good as the old sort, made of

pure tallow; but I dare say I may be wrong. Nevertheless, I have no liking for composites in theology, but prefer the genuine article without compromise.

Once I thoughtlessly hung a pound of tallow candles on a clothes-horse. This construction was moved near the fire, and the result was a mass of fat on the floor, and the cottons of the candles almost divested of tallow: a lesson to us all not to expose certain things to a great heat, lest we dissolve them. I fear that many a man's good resolutions only need the ordinary fire of daily life to make them melt away. So, too, with fine professions, and the boastings of perfection which abound in this age of shams.

The candle with a rush wick was the poor man's friend. Thrifty labourers' wives made them themselves; and *White*, in his *Selborne*, has a letter which gives quite an elaborate account of this economical home manufacture. Good housewives saved the skimmings of the bacon pot, precipitated the salt, and then put a little wax from their bee-hives into the grease. The rushes were gathered in summer, and steeped in water, the rinds removed, and the pith preserved entire. To dip the rushes

in the scalding fat required great care; but when the work was done, the labourer's house could be cheered in a small way with candle-light for 800 hours for three shillings. He adds that the very poor, who are always the worst economists, buy a half-penny candle every evening, and thus get only two hours' light for their money instead of eleven. Moral: there should be economy even in rushlights, how much more in consuming the light of life!

In those days it was a youthful joke to send a boy to the shop for a pound of cotton rushes. The grocer, if of an angry sort, was apt to make a rush at the lad, who thus appeared to mock him. It was in these times that we heard the story of the keeper of the chandler's-shop, who told her customers that "candles was riz." "Riz", said her neighbour, "everything is riz except my wages. But why have they riz?" "They tell me", said the other, "that tallow has gone up because of the war with Russia." "Well", replied the customer, "that is a queer story. Have they begun to fight by candle-light?" That woman had some inkling of the law of supply and demand. She may never have read *Adam Smith*, but it is possible that she was a Smith herself.

Those were the days when a wit is represented as saying to his tradesman, "I hope these candles will be better than the last." "I am sure I don't know, sir; was anything the matter with those I sent you?" "Matter enough", replied the wit; "they burned very well till they were about half gone, and then they would burn no longer." The catch is that, of course, they burned *shorter*.

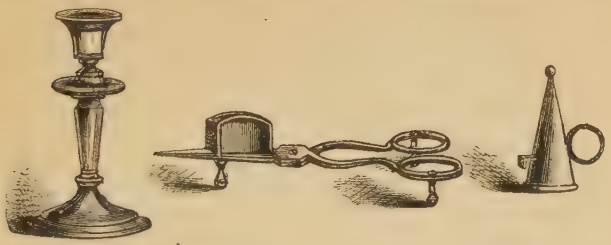
We had practical fun with candles, too; for we would scoop out a turnip, cut eyes and a nose in the rind, and then put a candle inside. This could be judiciously used to amuse, but it might also be injudiciously turned to purposes of alarming youngsters and greenhorns, who ran away, under the apprehension that a ghost was visible. Other things beside turnips can be used to frighten foolish people; but it is a shame to use the light of truth with such a design.

I do not think I ever saw the smoke of a candle employed as *Swift* suggests, when he says to servants in general, "Write your own names and your sweethearts' with the smoke of a candle, on the roof of the kitchen or servants' hall, to show your learning;" but smudges caused by candle-snuffs were not unusual in slovenly rooms.

No doubt the youths in my audience have found a candle helpful in astronomical observations, when they have smoked glass over a candle to use it in watching an eclipse. Many are the side uses of every useful article.

I have a distinct remembrance of a mission-room, where my father frequently preached, which was illuminated by candles in tin sconces which hung on the wall. These luminaries frequently went very dim for want of snuffing, and on one occasion an old man, who wanted to see his hymn-book, took the candle from its original place: out of his

hand he made a candlestick; his finger and thumb he used as a pair of snuffers; and,



finding it needful to cough, he accidentally made use of his mouth as an extinguisher. Thus the furniture of a candle was all contained in his proper person.

That wild wit, *Dean Swift*, in his advice to servants, says, "There are several ways of putting out candles, and you ought to be instructed in them all: you may run the candle end against the wainscot, which puts the snuff out immediately; you may lay it on the ground, and tread the snuff out with your foot; you may hold it upside down, until it is choked with its own grease, or cram it into the socket of the candlestick; you may whirl it round in your hand till it goes out; or you may spit on your finger and thumb, and pinch the snuff till it goes out. The cook may rub the candle's nose

into the meal tub, or the groom into a vessel of oats, or a lock of hay, or a heap of litter; the housemaid may put out her candle by running it against the looking-glass, which nothing cleans so well as candle-snuff; but the quickest and best of all methods is to blow it out with your breath, which leaves the candle clean and readier to be lighted." Some part or other of this advice must have been frequently followed, for an extinguisher was not always close at hand.

By the way, a candle blown out did not yield the most delicate of perfumes, neither was a street rendered delicious by having a candle-factory in it. There used to be, in Paternoster Row, an establishment which was odiously odorous, but we were always assured that the smell was not unhealthy. Perhaps it was not; but we confess we should have preferred to avoid the experiment. In the formation of the best of things there may be disagreeable processes. As to the smoke of a candle which is newly put out, we may remark upon it that the failure of a life which should have been a light is a very sickening calamity. If the light of professors of religion is blown out, the result is most

unsavoury. How well it is for us that we have to deal with One of whom it is written, "A smoking flax will he not quench"! Even when faith is so low that we are rather an offence than an illumination, he will not quench it, so tender is his love.

When preaching in a low-pitched building crowded with people, I have seen the candles burn low for want of air, a clear indication that we were killing ourselves by inhaling an atmosphere from which the vitalizing principle had almost all gone. I have been afraid of the lights going out, and have thought it better to let the congregation go out rather sooner than usual. To this day ventilation remains an unknown art. The various schemes which have been so much cried up are admirable upon paper; and there they had better remain. Oh, that we could have more oxygen in our places of worship! It would be next to the grace of God for value.

On one occasion, having a candle on each side of me in a small pulpit, I was somewhat vigorous, and dashed one of my luminaries from its place. It fell upon the bald head of a friend below, who looked up with an expression which I can see at this moment,

and it makes me smile still. I took no more notice of the accident than to weave it into what I was saying; and I believe most of my hearers considered it to have been a striking practical illustration of the remark which accompanied it, "How soon is the glory of life dashed down!"

Before my time the candles in places of worship offered a sad temptation to ungodly men and boys, who would bring sparrows in their pockets, and let them fly during the evening service. The poor birds made at once for the lights, and no end of confusion was the consequence. German critics and their humble admirers play the part of these sparrows nowadays with the great lights of inspired Scripture.

Outside some of the older meeting-houses there used to be a wooden stand near the grave-yard gate, on which a lantern was placed with a candle within it, to light the way to the place where prayer was wont to be made. The natural light was dim in those times; but I am old-fashioned enough to believe that the gospel light was in many a lowly sanctuary far more brilliant than it is to-day in mimic Gothic chapels. The blaze

of "modern thought" which pleases lovers of novelty does not guide the perplexed to heaven, nor cheer the passage of the departing through the valley of the shadow of death.

In our time we have smeared our boots with a tallow candle to keep out the wet when we have had to tramp through the snow and the water; and we have also tallowed our nose when it has been running with a cold. Still, we cannot conscientiously recommend the old prescription (dated 1430?) which we find recorded in doggerel rhyme:—

"Put your feet in hot water
As high as your thighs;
Wrappe your head up in flanelle
As low as your eyes;

"Take a quart of rum'd gruelle
When in bed as a dose;
With a number four dippe
Well tallow your nose."

I take the liberty of suggesting that if the rum were poured into the hot water provided for the feet it would be more likely to be useful than when put into the gruel. The candle will be quite sufficient to make the nose to shine, without setting it on fire with ardent spirits.

I remember reading, when I went to school, a capital story illustrating presence of mind, and it comes to my remembrance, after nearly fifty years. The anecdote is in *Chambers' Moral Class Book*, and is much too good to be lost.

"In Edinburgh, in the reign of George II., there was a grocer named George Dewar, who, besides teas, sugar, and other articles, now usually sold by grocers, dealt extensively in garden seeds. Underneath his shop he had a cellar, in which he kept a great quantity of his merchandise. One day he desired his servant-maid to go down to the cellar with a candle to fetch him a supply of a particular kind of soap kept there. The girl went to do her master's bidding, but she imprudently did not provide herself with a candlestick, and therefore found it necessary, while filling her basket with pieces of soap, to stick the candle into what she thought a bag of black seed, which stood open by her side. In returning, both her hands were required to carry the basket, so that she had to leave the candle where it was. When Mr. Dewar saw her coming up the trap-door without the candle, he asked her where she had left it? She

replied that she had stuck it into some black seed near the place where the soap lay. He instantly recollected that this black seed was gunpowder, and he knew that a single spark falling from the candle would blow up the house. He also knew that the candle, if left where it was, would, in a little time, burn down to the powder. To fly, then, was to make the destruction of his house and property certain, while to go down and attempt to take away the candle, was to run the risk of being destroyed himself; for he could not tell that a spark was not to fall the next instant into the powder. He made up his mind in a moment, and descended into the cellar. There he saw the candle burning brightly in the midst of the bag of gunpowder. He approached softly, lest, by putting the air in motion, he might cause the candle to sparkle. Then, stooping with the greatest deliberation over the sack, he formed his hands into a hollow, like the basin of a bedroom candlestick, and clasped the candle between his fingers. He thus had the chance of catching any spark which might fall: none, however, fell, and he bore away the candle in safety."

Bravo Mr. Dewar! But why did you leave your powder where your maid could run you into so great a risk? Presence of mind is greatly to be commended, but general carefulness may prevent the need of so great a demand upon courage as this case required.

I could multiply my reminiscences, but my business is not so much to lecture upon candles themselves as upon the sermons which lie within them. The Esquimaux consider tallow candles a great luxury; and I have met with a missionary who assured me that in the far North of America he had learned greatly to prefer a candle to a piece of sugar or any other dainty. May not tastes be thus perverted in reference to spiritual things? Is it not often so?

I will not offer you a discussion upon the physical or chemical nature of candles. I will not feed you on candles, for you have not the educated taste of my friend from the Hudson's Bay Territory. No, I will give you candle-light, and not the candles themselves; but if you would know all about them, read a capital set of lectures entitled, *Faraday on the Chemical History of a Candle.**

* Published by Chatto & Windus.

All this time I have been guilty of a terrible omission: *I have not defined a candle;* and how can a man know anything, or teach anything, if he is not very careful to describe the subject of his discourse in the most difficult manner conceivable? I regret that I cannot find a regular jaw-breaking definition in any of the dictionaries: they have treated the subject in too light a manner, and have not by any means confounded and obfuscated the word "candle" as it deserves to be confounded and obfuscated. The "Century Dictionary" describes it as "a taper: a cylindrical body of tallow, wax, spermaceti, or other fatty material, formed on a wick composed of linen or cotton threads woven or twisted loosely, or (as formerly) of the pith of a rush, and used as a source of artificial light." This is all very well; but how much more we might have known if the lexicographer had called candles "Nascent possibilities of illumination materialized in oleaginous cylindrical forms"! It is some comfort, that while certain great linguists derive the word from the Latin, *candela*, which comes from *candere*, to burn; others take it from the Welsh, which I guess must be *llandyllyn*, to blaze; and a third

party perceive its origin in the ancient Danish, *kindil*, to burn or kindle. Do you not all feel the better for these learned criticisms? Would you not feel safer still, if I could assure you that luminous and voluminous scientists have had serious doubts as to whether candles were known to the ancients at all; and if so, whether, indeed, there are such things now extant? Alfred the Great is said to have invented lanterns to preserve his candles from the draughts which came into his hall through windows which were innocent of glass; but this is extremely doubtful. Only the fossilized believer accepts the popular belief: the learned critic sees things in another light, or rather does not see them at all. According to the learned Dr. Batseyes, there would seem to have been two Alfreds, one who allowed the cakes to burn, and another who went to battle with the Danes. There does not appear to be any justification for believing that either of these Alfreds could have cared about candles so much as to invent lanterns for their protection. A person who would allow cakes to burn would scarcely be careful of mere tallow candles; and a man who fought with

the Danes was far more likely to put the fat into the fire than to preserve it from the wind. What think you of that? There is more in it than in most of the Biblical criticisms which I have met with. I am rather pleased with my historic doubt. With a little effort I fancy I could qualify myself to be a practiser of Destructive Criticism; but I conceive that the game would not be worth the candle, and I should only be doing more of that which is already overdone.

It would be too great a task for me to guide you into every corner in history or archæology where the candle leads the way. But there are a few odds and ends which may be worth picking up. Candle-ends must not be wasted, but put upon the save-all, and used for a good purpose.

Diogenes with his lantern lives before us, as he ranges through the city in the glare of the sun, looking for an honest man. He could not dispense with his light even now, if he went to some places in our land—I mean not exclusively the parliaments of politicians; there are religious assemblies where his lantern would not be unnecessary.

Alfred the Great, to whom we have already referred, is said to have measured time by the burning of candles, marking them, we suppose, so that so much candle meant an hour. No wonder, that to secure accuracy in his chronometer, he invented a shield in the form of a lantern, to keep off the draughts which would cause his measurers of time to burn away in no time.

Our forefathers kept a festival known as CANDLEMAS: it comes on February 2nd, and celebrates the Purification of the Virgin, and the Presentation of the infant Christ in the Temple. The feast takes its name from the custom, as old as the seventh century, of carrying lighted candles in procession, in memory of Simeon's words (Luke ii. 32), "A light to lighten the Gentiles."

On this day Roman Catholics consecrate the candles to be used in their churches

throughout the year. The feast is retained in the Anglican and Lutheran churches. It is frequently called *The Purification*. In Scotland, Candlemas is one of the quarter days for paying and receiving rents, interest, school fees, &c. In former days the boy who brought his dominie the largest present was made king of the school. Poor honours which could thus be bought! How like most of the glories of the world!

Christmas Eve has its candles to light up the Christmas tree. Our German friends

observe this pretty ceremony with great care, to the great delight of the juniors of the family. Among the things in *Luther's* life which charm all hearts, were his enjoyment of music and his delight in the children's Christmas tree.

In *Chaucer's England* one hears little of candles; but in the list of articles of a manor-house of the time we read of "an iron or latten candlestick," meaning, we suppose, an iron candlestick covered with brass, or a brass candlestick. Ancient candlesticks,

such as we are able to set before you, were more solid than elegant, and look as if they might have been copied from an hour-glass. After long research in olden history for some hints

about candles, a friend, who noticed our failure, suggested that we should search through a *History of Greece;* but we did not give him a fig, much less a groat, for his puny wit. Of old, the Shunammitish woman, who had a prophet's chamber, had provided a candlestick for the man of God; but far nearer our own day a domestic candlestick seems to have been a rare thing in this country. Until windows were supplied with glass, naked candles must have been too liable to be blown out to be used without lanterns. Moreover, we suspect that our fathers were not so apt to turn night into day as we are, but went to bed with the lamb, and rose with the lark. They lost somewhat by this habit; but possibly they gained more. The curfew, which put out all lights at an early hour, has been represented as an instrument of tyranny; but in all probability it was a needful social regulation to prevent the frequent fires which fell out in wooden houses, where the floor was covered with rushes, and candles were apt to be carelessly used. On the whole, we do not weep very bitterly over "the good old times", when we sit at ease far into the night, and read by the electric light.

The making of lanterns would seem to have been a flourishing trade in the olden time. Many were made of horn; but we have seen an engraving in which tin or thin iron would seem to be largely used.

Excommunications were pronounced by "Bell, book, and candle." After the formula had been read, and the book closed, the

assistants cast the lighted candles, they held in their hands, to the ground, so as to extinguish them, and the bells were clashed without order: the last two ceremonies symbolized the quenching of grace, and the disorder in the souls of the persons excommunicated. Now we understand why

> "The Cardinal rose with a dignified look,
> He call'd for his candle, his bell, and his book!
> In holy anger and pious grief
> He solemnly cursed that rascally thief!"

There was a special warning form of the same terrible punishment wherein the sinner was allowed space for repentance so long as a candle continued to burn. If he expressed no regret till the light was out, he was cast off; but while the candle yet would burn, the vilest sinner might return.

While remembering the holy candles of the Church of Rome, one cannot forget the miracles connected with these humble household luminaries.

We quote from *Hone's "Every-day Book.*

"Several stories of the miraculous faculties of St. Geneviève, the patron saint of Paris, represent them as very convenient in vexatious cases of ordinary occurrence; one of

these will serve as a specimen. On a dark, wet night she was going to church with her maidens with a candle borne before her, which the wind and rain put out; the saint merely called for the candle, and as soon as she took it in her hand it was lighted again, without any fire of this world.

"Other stories of her lighting candles in this way call to mind a candle, greatly venerated by *E. Worsley in 'A Discourse of Miracles wrought in the Roman Catholic Church, or, a Full Refutation of Dr. Stillingfleet's unjust Exceptions against Miracles*,' 8*vo*, 1676. At page 64, he says, 'that the miraculous wax candle yet seen at Arras, the chief city of Artois, may give the reader entertainment, being most certain, *and never doubted by any*. In 1105, that is, more than 500 years ago* (of so great antiquity the candle is), a merciless plague reigned in Arras. The whole city, ever devout to the Mother of God, experienced her, in this their necessity, to be a true mother of mercy. The manner was thus: the Virgin Mary appeared to two men, and enjoined them to tell the Bishop of Arras, that on the next Saturday, towards morning, she would

* Now nearly 800.

appear in the great church, and put into his hands a wax candle burning; from whence drops of wax should fall into a vessel of water prepared by the bishop. She said, moreover, that all the diseased that drank of this water should forthwith be cured. This, truly promised, truly happened. Our Blessed Lady appeared all beautiful, having in her hands a wax candle burning, which diffused light over the whole church; this she presented to the bishop; he, blessing it with the sign of the cross, set it in the urn of water; when drops of wax plentifully fell down into the vessel. The diseased drank of it, all were cured, the contagion ceased, and the candle, to this day preserved with great veneration, spends itself, yet loses nothing; and therefore remains still of the same length and greatness it did 500 years ago. A vast quantity of wax, made up of the many drops which fall into the water upon those festival days, when the candle burns, may be justly called a standing, indeficient miracle."

This candle story, though gravely related by a Catholic writer, as 'not doubted of by any', and as, therefore, not to be questioned, altogether failed in convincing the Protestant

Stillingfleet, that "miracles wrought in the Roman Catholic Church" ought to be believed. It fails with us also.

Even these lying wonders are more pleasant reading than the stories which relate to the use of candles in the conversion of Protestant heretics. They had their choice either to turn or burn, and judicious proselyters gave the obstinate a little taste of flame beforehand, to save them from the greater fire. Here are two precious stories from the famous "Acts and Monuments."

Fox tells us concerning Thomas Tomkins, a weaver, of Shoreditch, who was burned at Smithfield, that Bishop Bonner kept him in prison at Fulham half-a-year, "during which time the said bishop was so rigorous with him, that he beat him bitterly about the face; whereby his face was swelled . . . . .

"The rage of this bishop was not so great against him, but the constancy of the sufferer was much greater with patience to bear it; who, although he had not the learning as others had, yet he was so endued with God's mighty Spirit, and so perfectly planted in the knowledge of God's truth, that by no means could he be removed from the confession of

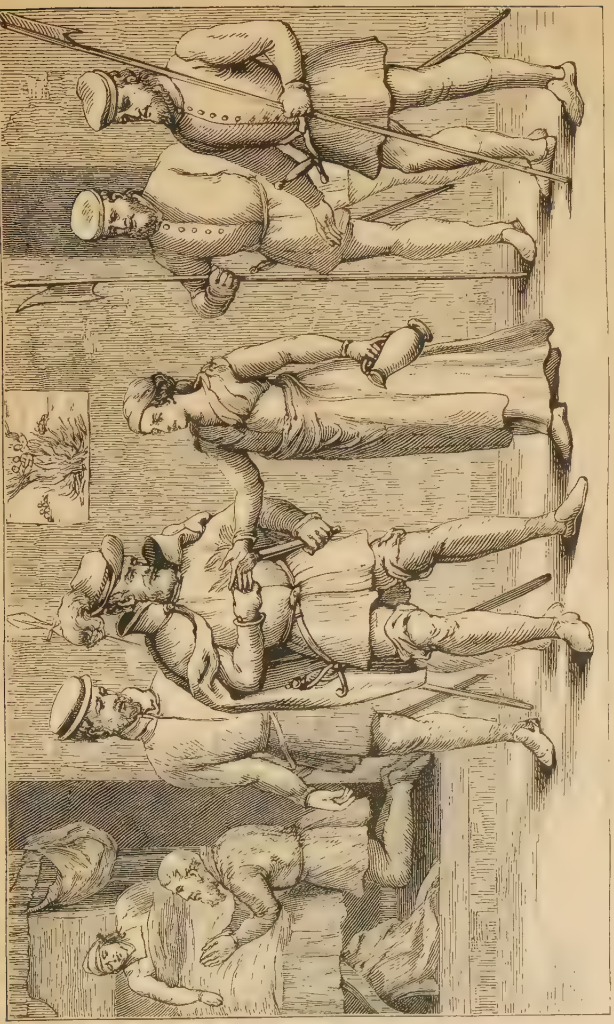
the truth. Whereupon Bonner the bishop being greatly vexed against the poor man, when he saw that by no persuasions he could prevail against him, devised another practice not so strange as cruel, further to try his constancy; to the intent, that seeing he could not otherwise convince him by doctrine out of the Scriptures, yet he might overthrow him by a fore-feeling and terror of death. So he calls for Thomas Tomkins, who, coming before the bishop, and standing as he was wont, in defence of his faith, the bishop having there a taper or wax candle of three or four wicks standing upon the table, took Tomkins by the fingers, and held his hand directly over the flame, supposing that by the smart and pain of the fire being terrified, he would leave off the defence of his Protestant doctrine.

"Tomkins, thinking no otherwise but there presently to die, began to commend himself unto the Lord, saying, 'O Lord! into thy hands I commend my spirit.' In the time that his hand was in burning, the same Tomkins afterward reported to one James Hinse, that 'his spirit was so rapt that he felt no pain.' In the which burning he never quailed, till the veins shrank and the sinews burst."

If a bishop acted thus, we do not wonder that the more brutal ones among the bigoted laity did the like. Here is another record from that *Fox* who spied out and laid bare the doings of Romish devotees.

"On the 2nd of August, 1557, five men and five women were burnt at Colchester, for the testimony and witness of Christ Jesus and his glorious gospel. In the number was one William Mount, of Much Bentley, in Essex, husbandman, with Alice, his wife, and Rose Allin, maid, the daughter of the said Alice Mount.

"At two o'clock on a Sunday morning in March, one master Edmund Tyrrel took with him the bailiff, and two constables, with divers others, a great number. Going into the room where father Mount and his wife lay, they bade them rise, for that they must go to Colchester Castle. Mother Mount, being very ill, asked that her daughter might fetch her some drink. This Tyrrel permitted. So Rose Mount took a stone jug in one hand, and a candle in the other, and went to draw drink for her mother; and as she came back again through the house, Tyrrel met her, and willed her to give her father and mother good



TYRREL BURNING THE HAND OF ROSE MOUNT.

counsel, and advertise them to be better Catholic people." Thus they conversed:—

Rose:—"Sir, they have a better instructor than I; for the Holy Ghost doth teach them, I hope; and he, be ye sure, will not suffer them to err."

"Why?" said master Tyrrel, "art thou still in that mind, thou naughty house-wife? Marry, it is time to look upon such heretics indeed."

Rose:—"Sir, with that which you call heresy, do I worship my Lord God; I tell you truth."

Tyrrel:—"Then I perceive you will burn, gossip with the rest, for company's sake."

Rose:—"No, sir, not for company's sake, but for my Lord Jesus Christ's sake, if so I be compelled; and I hope in his mercies if he call me to it, he will enable me to bear it."

So he, turning to his company, said, "Sirs, this gossip will burn: do you not think it?" "Marry, sir", quoth one, "prove her, and ye shall see what she will do by-and-by."

"Then the cruel Tyrrel, taking the candle from her, held her wrist, and put the burning candle under her hand, burning cross-wise over the back thereof so long, till the very sinews cracked asunder." Yet the brave Rose endured the pain like a true heroine, and then went and fetched her mother the drink.

How many of us, who preach with much confidence, could have endured the like torture?

Let us hope that if we were called to such pain, grace would be given to sustain us under it.

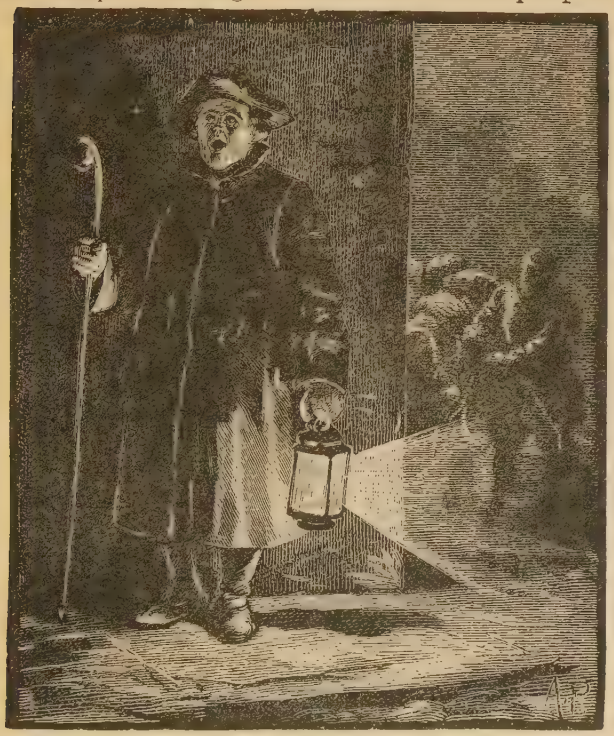
One is soon weary of such quotations, and we will leave them when we have reminded ourselves of the brave word of old Latimer. When standing on the fagots, with his back to the stake, he turned round to his brother Bishop, Ridley, and said, "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man, and we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out": AND SO SAY ALL OF US.

In the City of London, in olden times, the streets being unlighted by public lamps, and thieves being plentiful, a law was made for everybody to put a candle out over his door. As the story comes to me, the law was obeyed—a candle was exhibited, but it was not lighted. The letter of the law was darkness, for the spirit of the law was absent.

The wise Corporation had to meet and ordain a regulation that everybody should light the candle which by law was to be over his door. So they did; but after it had been lighted according to law the wind blew it out, and again the citizens saved their tallow.

The City fathers made another alteration in their edict, and decreed that everybody should hang a lantern over his door. This was soon accomplished; but the householders put no candle in the lantern. The Corporation has always been amazingly wise, and is so still. You laugh, but my reverence for all public bodies is so great that you cannot suppose that I intended anything sarcastic. The Council went over the old ground, and settled that the lantern should have a candle in it. Again, the good folks did as they were bidden, but they did not light the candle. This called forth the decree that in the lantern there should be a lighted candle. Canny citizens put only a very small length of candle; and though it was soon burnt out, they could not be charged with a breach of the law in that case made and provided. The Corporation specified the length of the candle to be lighted, but I dare say clever people still dodged the law. It is never difficult to drive a coach and four through the Acts of Parliaments and Corporations. There is one way of doing a right thing, but there are dozens of ways of not doing it; and people are very ingenious at avoiding rules which involve expense.

Candles suggest save-alls, and economical minds need not that the hint be repeated. Misers have been known to go to bed to save candle for themselves; what would they not do to escape burning a candle for other people?



The watchmen of our city were in the old time the themes of constant jest. They had

come to be venerable persons wrapped in capes of many folds, and night-caps of the warmest sort: each one of these had his lantern, with which he emulated in the streets the glow-worms of the country lanes. Stowe represents these guardians of the night as carrying and using bells to give warning to householders to put out fire, and light candle. Nice helps to repose these old gentlemen must have been, especially if they conscientiously obeyed orders, and both knocked at doors and sounded their alarums to wake people out of their first sleep to look to their candles! All very pretty it sounds in the rhyme, but not quite so delightful if heard in the still of night.

> "A light here, maids, hang out your light,
> And see your horns be clean and bright,
> That so your candle clear may shine,
> Continuing from six till nine;
> That honest men that walk along
> May see to pass safe without wrong."

In the days of Henry VIII. the citizens of London did little in the way of hanging out candles, and hence men cut purses in the dark with impunity. Harry's remedy was, "Hang up the thieves, and let honest men

keep indoors." Very thoroughly did he practise his own rule, so that it is recorded that three-score and twelve thousand petty thieves were hung up during his reign. Poor saving this, to spare the hanging out of candles and indulge in the hanging up of men! There can be no doubt that good light is the friend of honesty and the destruction of thieves. This is a parable which we need not wait to expound.

Many bequests have been left for the keeping up of lights, especially in places near the river Thames. I will give you a specimen. John Wardall, by will, dated 29th August, 1656, gave to the Grocers' Company a tenement called "The White Bear", in Walbrook, to the intent that they should yearly, within thirty days after Michaelmas, pay to the Churchwardens of St. Botolph, Billingsgate, £4, to provide a good and sufficient iron and glass lantern, with a candle, for the direction of passengers to go with more security to and from the water-side all night long, to be fixed at the north-east corner of the parish church of St. Botolph, from the feast day of St. Bartholomew to Lady Day. Out of this sum £1 was to be paid to the sexton for taking

care of the lantern. It is well in life and in death to minister light to this dark world.

It was a curious way of expressing his appreciation of a politician, when Mr. Alderman White, of Winchester, sent Wilkes, the author of the notorious Number 45, a present of forty-five dozens of candles. Possibly the worthy Alderman had an eye to advertisement as well as to admiration. At any rate, he succeeded: for the wags, one of whom signs himself Will Wickham, immortalized him in their verses.

"What hero, what king,
Sweet muse, wilt thou sing?
What alderman venture to handle?—
No subject so bright
As Alderman White,
And his forty-five dozen of candle.

* * * * *

From him the bright name
Of freedom shall flame,
And all who that cause understand ill
May see wrong from right,
By the true patriot light
Of forty-five dozen of candle.

On a theme so sublime,
I for ever would rhyme,
But my muse I no longer shall dandle;
So I wish you good-night,
Mr. Alderman White;
But beware of a thief in the candle."

We must not fail to mention *Hogarth's* famous drawing of *The Politician.* That admirable publication, *The Penny Magazine* in the year 1834, had such an excellent exposition of the picture, that I cannot

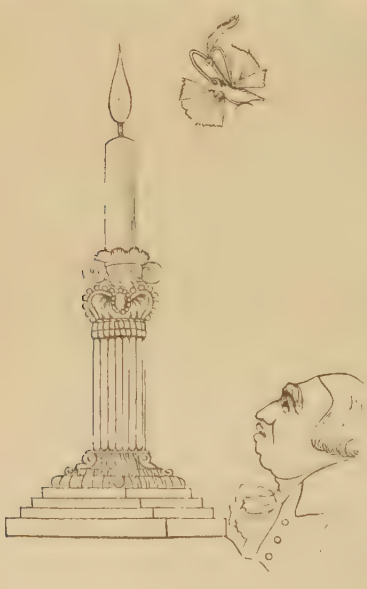
forbear to quote it in full. "This piece of exquisite humour, is said to have been suggested to Hogarth by a living and well-known character in his day, a Mr. Tibson, laceman in the Strand, who preferred politics to trade, and the *Gazetteer* newspaper to the ledger and day-book. Never was a ruling passion—an intentness on a favourite subject—more happily portrayed than in the print before us. The mere position or seat of the old quidnunc tells a story! From the way in which he has squared himself in his chair, you may see he is a man determined not to budge until he has conned his dear paper through to the last line, word, and syllable. His short, stout legs, with those broad bases of high-quartered shoes, are set down on the floor like pillars! It would require a dray-horse to drag him from his occupation!

"To throw a full, clear light on his sheet (the only sheet, we may be sure, he ever reads), he has taken his tallow candle from its socket, and, indifferent to the abomination of grease, holds it in his right hand, whilst his left hand grasps his journal—the Benjamin of his heart.

"The ascending flame has set fire to his hat, has literally burnt a hole through its broad brim. The candle has also fearfully burnt down and has guttered; the red-hot wick and the base of the flame are within the eighth of an inch of his finger, and it is difficult to say which part of him will be burnt first, his forehead, his nose, or his unflinching hand. But what of that? He is rapt, and altogether unconscious of his danger, and on he will read until the fire reaches him. Look at his countenance the while! with its deep lines of thought, and the half acute and half solemn compression of his lips! There is many a siege and blockade in the dropping corner of that mouth, and a campaign or a treaty in every wrinkle of that face! * * *

"Thanks to the introduction of narrow-brimmed hats, there is now no danger of our quidnuncs setting fire to their beavers. Their heads, indeed, are sometimes heated by flaming paragraphs; but the heat is all inward. There are political occasions on which the people have to think and to act, as far as they can act legally; but the only way to think and to act rightly is to be cool, and not set their hats or their heads on fire."

In the days of the great Napoleon the rage of English people against *Boney* knew no bounds. Woodward designed a cartoon entitled "The Corsican Moth", which flying towards the candle is made to say, "It is a very fierce flame: I am afraid I shall singe my wings!" Old George III., just below the candlestick, is muttering "Thou little contemptible insect, I shall see thee consumed by-and-by!" We are glad that no such irrational hate now stirs our population with enmity to France. There is no need for me to moralize upon the moth and the candle; yet it were well if some who have been already injured by vicious courses could have the sense to shun those evils which have already wrought them so much ill.



It brings us back to the dark ages, when we find that, so late as 1836, His Majesty William IV. was dependent upon wax candles for the due delivery of his speech to Parliament. I will give you the passage:—

A Royal Speech by Candlelight.

"The opening day of the Session of Parliament, in 1836 (February 4), was unusually gloomy, which, added to an imperfection in the sight of King William IV., and the darkness of the House, rendered it impossible for His Majesty to read the Royal Speech with facility. Most patiently and good-naturedly did he struggle with the task, often hesitating, sometimes mistaking, and at others correcting himself. On one occasion he stuck altogether, and after two or three ineffectual efforts to make out the word, he was obliged to give it up, when, turning to Lord Melbourne, who stood on his right hand, and looking him most significantly in the face, he said, in a tone sufficiently loud to be audible in all parts of the House, 'Eh! what is it?' Lord Melbourne having whispered the obstructing word, the King proceeded to toil through the speech; but

by the time he got to about the middle, the librarian brought him two wax-lights, on which he suddenly paused; then raising his head, and looking at the Lords and Commons, he addressed them on the spur of the moment, in a perfectly distinct voice, and without the least embarrassment or mistake of a single word, in these terms:—

"'My Lords and Gentlemen,—I have hitherto not been able, from want of light, to read this speech in the way its importance deserves; but as lights are now brought me, I will read it again from the commencement, and in a way which, I trust, will command your attention.'

"The King, though evidently fatigued by the difficulty of reading in the first instance, began at the beginning, and read through the speech in a manner which would have done credit to a professor of elocution!"

Ladies and Gentlemen, it would seem to be a wonder, that a King should be able to read without fainting away! When he does his royal best he seems to be nearly as good as "a professor of elocution." This is not saying much. People who try to flatter rulers generally succeed in making them

ridiculous. Think of his Majesty's being able to deliver an extempore speech of one sentence! Wonders will never cease.

Let us get to our "Sermons in Candles" in real earnest. We will begin with the candle-light which we find in Holy Scripture.

The golden candlestick of the Tabernacle and Temple may hardly be mentioned in this place, for it was rather a seven-branched stand for oil lamps than for candles. Its representation on the arch of Titus at Rome is visible to all, and stands as an enduring testimony to the truth of Holy Scripture.

Our Lord walks among the golden candlesticks of his churches; but these again are candelabra or lamp-stands. In a country

where olive oil abounded so much as in Palestine, there was no need of the candle

of our colder climate—the lamp being so readily supplied with the best of fuel. These lamps were of many forms; but what mattered it, so long as their light was good? Many are the methods of the churches, but the main thing is to shine with Gospel light.

In the Word of God, we read of candles in different connections; but my previous remark applies to all the passages. The probability is that they all relate to lamps. That, however, shall not hinder me from speaking upon them. Candles are mentioned in relation to the character and condition of wicked men. Job (xviii. 6) says,—"The light shall be dark in his tabernacle, and his candle shall be put out with him." His light never was that of the Sun of Righteousness, but he set up the candle of creature-comfort, that he might forget the night of his soul. Yet even this was but a temporary light, a mere candle which melted as it shone. God is against the ungodly man, and therefore, in due season, his very light will become darkness, and even his small joy will be gone like a candle which is blown out. In all cases a candle is doomed to cease its shining sooner or later. It comes to an end by gradual and natural consumption,

even if all goes well with it; but in the case mentioned in the text, it is quenched by violence, or "put out." How great is the darkness of the sinner in such a case! If the believer has his candlestick of earthly comfort removed out of its place, his God still abides with him; and therefore he rejoices in heavenly light, and does not stumble; but when the ungodly lose their candle, they have lost all; and so Job adds, "The steps of his strength shall be straitened, and his own counsel shall cast him down." When the lamp goes out in the Arab tent, all is gloomy and desolate; and hence the misery which is symbolized by the quenching of the candle is great.

In another place Job (xxi. 17) says,—"How oft is the candle of the wicked put out!" Suddenly the glory, the prosperity, yea, the very life of the wicked may come to an end. It has been so in hundreds of cases. Some think the passage means "How seldom!" rather than "How often!" Assuredly, the righteous have often considered providence to be slack in its dealings with the ungodly: but is it not great long-suffering which spares the guilty, in the hope of their repentance? Why

should we grudge them a little candle-light, when, alas! they will so soon dwell in the outer darkness?

Job does not restrict this metaphor to the sons of evil, but uses it in reference to his own condition. Hear how he sighs (xxix. 2, 3): "Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; when his candle shined upon my head!" He had known prosperity, and that was gone! He had enjoyed heavenly fellowship, and that had been obscured. The candle of the Lord is a candle indeed. When that brightness is reflected from our faces, we are as happy as the angels in heaven; but when it is taken away, we sit in a darkness which may be felt. He who has once enjoyed fellowship with God will never again be happy without it. If we had remained in the blindness of nature, we should not have known the glory of divine love, nor should we have been in distress when a conscious sense of it is withdrawn; but now that we are enlightened by divine grace, darkness brings woe to us. When we lose the candle of the Lord, we imitate Job in sighing for its return.

David, who knew full well the brightness

of that candle, and also knew the miss of it, jubilantly cries out in Psalm xviii. 28, "Thou wilt light my candle." The Scotch version well rhymes it:—

> "The Lord will light my candle so,
> That it shall shine full bright:
> The Lord my God will also make
> My darkness to be light."

Believers shall not be left in the dark. If no servant comes to light our candle, the Lord himself will do it. What a mass of meaning can be packed away in one figurative expression! *Matthew Henry*, without the least straining of the metaphor, reads the passage thus: "Thou wilt revive and comfort my sorrowful spirit, and not leave me melancholy: thou wilt recover me out of my troubles, and restore me to peace and prosperity: thou wilt make my honour bright, which is now eclipsed; thou wilt guide my way, and make it plain before me, that I may avoid the snares laid for me; thou wilt light my candle to work by, and give me an opportunity of serving thee and the interests of thy kingdom among men."

Solomon spoke of a candle when he said, "The spirit of man is as the candle of the

Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly." Did he not refer to conscience? Did he not mean that conscience is in some respects a divine light—"the candle of the Lord"? and in all respects a discovering light—searching all the inward parts? Take care that you never trifle with this candle. A loss of light in the conscience means decrease of light for our whole manhood.

I am afraid that conscience in many persons has become no better than an unkindled candle: not giving light, nor even making darkness visible. I have heard of a man who said, "Conscience! Conscience? I have plenty of conscience." "Yes", said one, "and it is as good as new, for I have never known you use it." In that case it was a candle unlighted, and the old rhyme has it:—

"A candle that affords no light,
What profits it by day or night?"

An enlightened conscience is greatly to be prized, and it should be kept free from

everything which might mar its brightness. *Milton* says:—

> "He that has light within his own clear breast,
> May sit i' the centre and enjoy bright day."

God grant that we may never do violence to our conscience even in the least degree: for this is to quench our own light!

Solomon mentions the candle in his graphic picture of the virtuous woman, who not only worked by day, but wrought far into the night. He says (Prov. xxxi. 18), "Her candle goeth not out by night." Many would have their hours shortened as to work, and lengthened as to sleep; but she did the very reverse. She lengthened her days by taking hours out of her nights. A wonderful example that woman was! I recollect hearing, when I was a boy, a minister preach about her from this text, "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies." The opening of that memorable discourse was somewhat in this fashion:—"'Who can find a virtuous woman?' Why, anyone who chooses to look for her; and the only reason why Solomon could not find her was because he looked in the wrong place. Virtuous women kept clear of a king who

had such a multitude of wives. But", said the preacher, " if Solomon were here now, and were made truly wise, he would not long ask—'Who can find a virtuous woman?' He would join the church, and find himself at once among a band of holy women, whose adornment is a meek and quiet spirit. If he were permitted to look in upon the Dorcas meeting, he would see many of the sort of whom he once said, 'She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.' If he would adjourn to the Sunday-school, he would there meet with others of whom he would say, 'She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.' We, who serve the Lord Jesus, meet many a time with virtuous women, of each of whom we could say with the wise king, 'Her price is far above rubies.'" The preacher of whom I have spoken interested me by the remark, " Why 'above *rubies*'? Why not above *diamonds?* My brethren, the diamond is but a pale and sickly stone, which needs the glare of candle-light or gas to set it off; but the ruby is a ruddy, healthy gem, which is beautiful by daylight. Lovely

is the woman whose face is full of the glow of activity in domestic life. That is the kind of woman who makes the housewife in whom the heart of her husband safely trusteth." Whatever one may think of the correctness of the exposition, the sentiment of the preacher was sound and practical.

In Scripture the candle is mentioned when the destruction of a city is described. "Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle" (Jeremiah xxv. 10). When no longer there were days of joy—no festivals, no weddings—then was the city brought low; but when the sound of the grinding of the meal by the millstone altogether ceased in the morning, and the light of the candle was no more to be seen in the evening, then was the city deserted, and left to be a desolation. If you passed a city on a hill, and saw no candle shining from any window, then you knew that the inhabitants had ceased. The description is as graphic as it is pictorial. The fate of the spiritual Babylon, or apostate Church, is set forth in the Book of

Revelation, in the most solemn and sweeping terms: "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; and the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee" (Revelation xviii. 21—23). Who, that has read with care the story of the apostate church, can do other than rejoice with the holy apostles and prophets that God will thus deal with her?

The prophet Zephaniah, in his first chapter, at the twelfth verse, mentions candles in that memorable passage wherein he describes the overthrow of Jerusalem by the Babylonians: "I will search Jerusalem with candles." The same description might stand for the destruction of the city by the Romans; for *Josephus* tells us that princes, and priests, and mighty men were dragged even out of

the sewers, and pits, and caves, and tombs, in which they had hidden themselves from fear of death. The imagery of the prophet well describes the conduct of soldiers when sacking a city. They not only seize all that they can see at once, or with a slight search; but, rightly judging that the people will have hidden their treasures, they ransack their darkest cellars and closets, and pry into their furniture; and, that they may see the better, they light many candles and look into every corner and cranny, so that nothing may escape them. Now, when God comes to search his church he will do it himself—"I will search Jerusalem"; and he will do it as minutely as spoilers in the hour of sack. He will find out every hypocrite, "and punish the men that are settled on their lees; that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil." Ah me! if the Lord thus examines our churches; if he comes to close work with men's souls, and searches with candles to find out their condition; shall we be able to endure an investigation so thorough, so minute, so all-discovering?

When we reach the New Testament, we

remember our Saviour's words: "Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house": Matthew v. 15. Grace is meant to be seen: to conceal it is contrary to common sense. Our Lord also speaks of a high degree of grace in Luke xi. 36. "If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light." How blessed to have "no part dark"! To have "the whole full of light"! This is no dim twinkling, but "the bright shining of a candle", or rather of "a lamp", whereby all in the room are made glad. What a beautiful condition of heart! But we ought all to possess it; for darkness is a work of the devil, and all the devil's works our Lord Jesus has come to destroy. God grant that the whole of our being may be irradiated with the brightness of his grace! Then we shall have nothing to conceal, and nothing around us will lie in darkness. Our houses will be lit up with glory, and the bells on the horses, and the vessels of our dwellings will reflect the brightness of our consecrated lives. Alas,

that so many who have a measure of divine knowledge and grace, yet have some part of their nature still in the darkness! You cannot help noticing that their sanctification is partial. Perhaps it will be the wiser course to keep our eyes at home, and pray the Lord to enlighten *our* darkness, that we may, ourselves, shine as lights in the world.

Remember, also, the remarkable parable of the woman who had lost her piece of money. The question is put in Luke xv. 8, "What woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?" In this way must we look for lost souls, with the light of the gospel and the besom of the law. You must be at some expense if you would find the lost! You must light a candle, and let it be burnt up. You must make a little dust, too; for nothing worth doing will

be accomplished without a stir. Yet dust-making is not all. Certain people seem to think that you will find all the lost pieces of money by merely making dust enough and noise enough; but they are wrong. There must be more light than dust. Nothing can be done without the light of the candle. Instruction must be given, as well as excitement created. A little dust is a good sign, for it shows that the lethargic order is being disturbed, and old things are passing away; but, at the same time, we must not make so much dust that we cannot see by the light of our candle. Indeed, we must not be content either with the dust or the light; we may not rest till we spy out our lost treasure, and place it in safety. Use the candle more than the broom. Be not negligent as to either; but keep your eye open to find the money.

There is even a connection between candles and heaven, though it is of a negative kind; for there "They need no candle, neither light of the sun": Revelation xxii. 5. Here on earth creature-comforts yield us their candle-light; but there the Creator himself will fill us with his own presence, and we

shall no more need these temporal blessings than a man requires a candle at noon-day. How soon may we be privileged to know how bright is the place where "the Lord God giveth them light"! Thus the Scripture is not without its "sermons in candles", as I have shown you.

One allusion I will venture to mention, though the word employed is "lamp." David says, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path": Psalm cxix. 105. David drew his comparison from what is seen every night in an Oriental city. He who goes out into the street at night in Eastern towns is bound to carry a lantern with him. You would find it very necessary if you were there, if only because of the dogs who prowl about for their living. They are very fond of shin bones, and they do not like them any the less if they happen to be alive, with a little meat upon them. A light may keep them off Besides that, there are open gutters, and heaps of filth, and nobody knows the abominations of the unspeakable Turk and his cousins in the East. You must, therefore, when you go out at night, carry a lantern, for your own protection; and the law, also,

compels you to do so. If you are out without a lantern, the police put you down as an individual who is abroad with ill design.

The very common lantern, with which children are so pleased, is a fair specimen of what are used at this day, and therefore it resembles what David used; for things in the East undergo little or no change. The proper use of such a lantern was to guide the feet, and this is the use of the Word of God. Certain brethren hold it up so as to see the stars, hoping to find out what is going to happen next week, or next year. How great they are over seals and trumpets! One admires the depth and the darkness of their research. We may leave them to their discoveries: time will show whether they are correct or not.

Others hold the heavenly light where its only use would be to minister warmth and comfort to the heart: these we do not blame,

unless they forget other matters. David made a practical use of the sacred light: he held it where it would shine upon his way, and enable him to keep out of foul places, and walk in a clean path. The Bible is a blessing to us in many ways; but he is wisest who makes it his "Every-day Book", and rules his family life and his business life by its holy precepts. Read the prophecies, prize the promises, but fail not, by God's grace, to practise the precepts.

Many people use their Bibles as lights to be hung up at a Chinese feast of lanterns, for amusement, or for show. Their theology is a brilliant advertisement of their information; their Biblical studies make their conversation attractive; but *bonâ fide* practical godliness they fight shy of. They prefer the Book of Revelation to the Sermon on the Mount. Very general is this unpractical treatment of Holy Scripture. Have you not heard of the "Golden Rule"? A wonderful precept is that Golden Rule, and I am sure you all admire it. I have been told, that one day the Golden Rule wandered out of church into the Stock Exchange, got its hat knocked over its eyes, and was led out by the beadle,

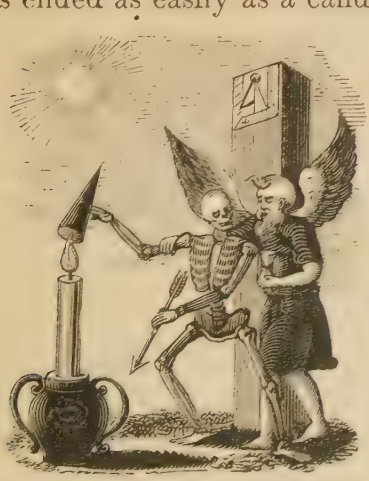
who asked, "What could have induced you to come here? What business have you out of church? You are neither a bull nor a bear." The jobbers and brokers could not do their business with this precious Golden Rule prying about; for its teaching did not allow latitude enough to either buyers or sellers. Perhaps I am mistaken. I am not sure that it was the Stock Exchange; on second thoughts, it may have been the Coal Exchange, or possibly Mark Lane. I am getting a little mixed. I wonder whether it was the Cattle Market, or Covent Garden, or Mincing Lane. Perhaps, after all, I am in error, and *it was your shop*. But this I do know, that the Golden Rule is always highly respected when it keeps itself to itself; but if it meddles with tradespeople, they say, "Business is business": to which I would reply, "And business has no business to be such business as it often is." The Golden Rule in business generally is, "Do others, or others will do you." But the Word of God speaks in nobler fashion. Scripture lays down by-laws which the most of men treat with respectful negligence: they have no objection to the light and comfort of Scripture

in sickness, sorrow, or death; but they want it not in their everyday walks in the City. This is not as it should be. Use you the light of God every day and all the day.

It is time to quit these Scriptural allusions, and come to the work of presenting emblems and illustrations. I will begin by borrowing. I dare say you have seen a little, square, podgy book, as broad as it is long; very much like a smaller Bradshaw's Railway Guide: I refer to *Quarles' School of the Heart*. If ever you have been shut up in a remote farmhouse, where there was nothing to read except the almanack for the year 1843, when you had read that through three times, and had picked over *Buchan's Family Medicine*, you were driven at last to this quaint old book of uncouth cuts and rhymes. It is an immortal work, and, despite the critics, it has true poetry in it, though its metaphors are often grotesque and strained. Towards the end you find certain emblems made from candles; and I have put seven of them together to set forth the "Seven Ages of Man." This first candle, long and slender, is the child, which, if spared, has quite a length of light and life before it.

When newly lighted the flame is easily blown out, but there are large possibilities of continuance. So also at twenty we anticipate long years of life, and yet it may end in one short hour. The other candles show us as thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, seventy years of age. Our figure goes no further, "for if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow."

Look at this shining emblem, and judge each one his own position as to his remainder of life. Mark how little is left to some of you! Pray God that you may use all that remains to the praise of God. I asked concerning a sick friend the other day, and the answer I received was a shake of the head, and the remark, "I am sorry to say, he cannot last much longer. It is only a matter of time: his life hangs on a thread." I answered, "And that is exactly the case with me." Is it not true of every one of us that we are mortal? and that our departure is only a matter of time? Our life is ended as easily as a candle is blown out.



Here is a facsimile of *Quarles'* quaint wood-cut, whereby he tried to set forth the eagerness of Death to quench the light of life, and the way in which Time, for a season, holds back the hand of the last enemy.

Quarles has written many books, and he frequently brings in candle-light. Having introduced him, I leave you to make his further acquaintance as your taste directs.

Robert Farlie has given us some capital emblems, and there is a reproduction of them in a fine volume in which his work is intermingled with that of *Jacob Catts*. It was published as a Christmas book by Longmans.

Gotthold has quite a series of Candle emblems. Here is the first one:—

"*Gotthold*, wishing to seal a letter, called for a lighted candle. The maid obeyed his orders; but proceeding too hastily, the flame, which had not yet gathered sufficient strength, went out. Here, said *Gotthold*, we have that which may well remind us of the gentleness and moderation to be observed in our comportment towards weak and erring brethren. Had this candle, when first lighted, been carried slowly, and shaded by the hand from the air, it would not have been extinguished, but would soon have burned with vigour. In like manner, many a weak brother might be set right, if we only came to his help in the right way, and with kindly advice. It is not by violent strokes that you reduce the

dislocated limb. Christ himself does not quench the smoking flax, but blows upon it with the gentle breath of the blessed words that proceed out of his mouth (Luke iv. 22); and this was the reason why disconsolate sinners flocked around, and pressed upon him, to hear what he said. Luke v. 1; xv. 1."

But you will soon be weary of me if I do not bring to an end this first part of my "Sermons in Candles." I will close with a short meditation, from quaint *Bishop Hall*, and a rhyme from *Master John Bunyan*. The Bishop, whose wording I have a little altered, has a Contemplation under the heading of—

"On Occasion of the Lights brought in."

"Well as we love the light, we are wont to salute it, at its first coming in, with winking or closed eyes; as not abiding to see that without which we cannot see. All sudden changes, though for the better, have a kind of trouble attending them. By how much more excellent any object is, by so much more is our weak sense mis-affected in the first apprehending of it.

"O Lord, if thou shouldest manifest thy glorious presence to us here, we should be confounded at the sight of it? How wisely, how mercifully hast thou reserved that for our glorified estate; where no infirmity shall dazzle our eyes; where perfect righteousness shall give us perfect boldness both of sight and fruition!"

Master Bunyan gives us a world of thought in the doggerel rhyme with which I end this first lesson.

MEDITATIONS UPON A CANDLE.

Man's like a candle in a candlestick,
Made up of tallow and a little wick;
And as the candle is before 'tis lighted,
Just such be they who are in sin benighted.
Nor can a man his soul with grace inspire,
More than can candles set themselves on fire.
Candles receive their light from what they are not;
Men, grace from Him, for whom at first they care not.

We manage candles when they take the fire;
God ruleth men, when grace doth them inspire.
As biggest candles give the better light,
So grace on biggest sinners shines most bright.
The candle shines to make another see;
A saint unto his neighbour light should be.
The blinking candle we do much despise;
Saints dim of light are high in no man's eyes.

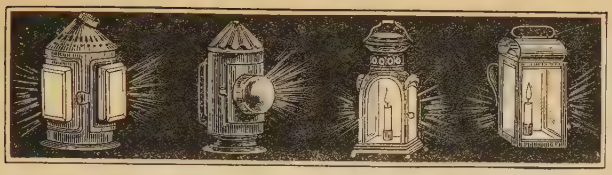
Again, though it may seem to some a riddle,
We used to light our candle at the middle.
True, light doth at the candle's end appear,
And grace the heart first reaches by the ear;
But 'tis the wick the fire doth kindle on,
As 'tis the heart that grace first works upon.
Thus both do fasten upon what's the main,
And so their life and vigour do maintain.

As candles in the wind are apt to flare,
So Christians in a tempest to despair.
We see the flame with smoke attended is;
And in our holy lives there's much amiss.
Sometimes a thief will candle-light annoy:
And lusts do seek our graces to destroy.
What brackish is will make a candle sputter;
'Twixt sin and grace there's oft a heavy clutter.
Sometimes the light burns dim, 'cause of the snuff,
And sometimes 'tis extinguish'd with a puff:
But watchfulness preventeth both these evils,
Keeps candles light, and grace in spite of devils.
But let not snuffs nor puffs make us to doubt;
Our candle may be lighted, though puff'd out.

The candle in the night doth all excel,
Nor sun, nor moon, nor stars then shine so well:
So is the Christian in our hemisphere,
Whose light shows others how their course to steer.
When candles are put out all's in confusion;
Where Christians are not, devils make intrusion.
They then are happy who such candles have:
All others dwell in darkness and the grave.

But candles that do blink within the socket,
And saints whose eyes are always in their pocket,
Are much alike; such candles make us fumble;
And at such saints, good men and bad do stumble.
Good candles don't offend, except sore eyes,
Nor hurt, unless it be the silly flies.
How good are shining candles in the night!
How sweet is holy living for delight!

But let us draw towards the candle's end.
The fire, you see, doth wick and tallow spend;
So wastes man's life, until his glass is run,
And so the candle and the man are done.
The man now lays him down upon his bed;
The wick yields up its fire, and so is dead.
The candle now extinct is, but the man
By grace mounts up to glory, there to stand.



Sermons in Candles.

LECTURE No. 2.

I AM afraid the science of emblems does not flourish so well among us as it did in a former age, when it constituted an important branch of learning. You might find a rare field of recreative study in Emblem literature. So many have tried it that certain of the older emblem-books have become too expensive for the ordinary reader to purchase. There has been a run upon them, and this has raised the price beyond their intrinsic value.

In almost every collection of emblems, I have found the candle, and perhaps most frequently of all, *the candle and the fly*. I am not cruel enough to wish to give you an actual example of the way in which flies, moths, and other insects are glamoured with the glare of a candle; but I may give you the facsimile of an old cut from *Giles Corrozet's Hecatomgraphie*, a French work, dated 1540. Under the motto, "*War is sweet only to the inexperienced*", he gives, in illustration, a number of moths or butterflies fluttering toward a candle: said candle and moths being of gigantic size if compared with the room. Attached to the wood-cuts are verses which signify that those alone seek the battle-field who know not its great dangers. This reminds me that the good Earl of Shaftesbury told me that when he was Lord Ashley, he once rode with the Duke of Wellington through the lovely villages of Berkshire, and for half-an-hour the warrior was silent. When at length he spoke, he

said, "I dare say you wonder what has made me so quiet. I was thinking of the havoc which war would make of all this peace and beauty. If war should ever come here, it might be my duty to burn and destroy all these happy homes. Whether there follow upon it defeat or victory, war is a great calamity." The great soldier spoke the truth. May those nations which delight in war rest content with former burnings of their wings, and let the flame alone.

Others have used the same emblem as a warning against the indulgence of sinful passions. The motto is, *Brevis et damnosa voluptas* "short but ruinous pleasure." "For one pleasure a thousand pains." The sin promised to enlighten the eyes, but it burned into the very soul. Full often when we hear of young people ruined by unbridled appetites, we are apt to say with the world's great poet:—

"Thus hath the candle singed the moth."

Error has the same effect on certain restless minds. No sooner is a new theory started, than they make a dash for it; and though it costs them comfort, fellowship, and holiness, they fly at it again. "O foolish Galatians,

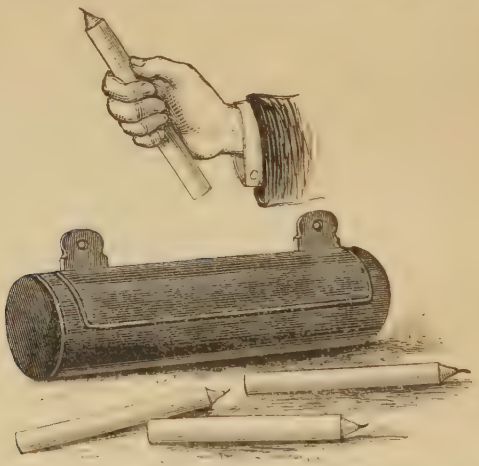
who hath bewitched you?" The fascination of novelty appears to be irresistible, when minds are weak and conceited.

Here is a picture of a candle. In artistic circles the drawing of an object may cost far more than the object itself. Did not the Shah of Persia once ask the price of the painting of a donkey, and, when he heard the amazing demand, he calculated how many real asses could have been purchased with the money. No doubt a well-painted picture of a candle would cost as much as would light us for many a month, and yet it would never yield to our necessity a single beam of light. So, the resemblance of true godliness costs a man far more care and trouble than the genuine article would involve, and yet it is nothing after all. One cannot light himself to bed by the picture of a candle, neither can he find comfort in the hour of death by the imitation of religion.

There must be reality, and that reality involves flame and light: in our case a flame and light which none but God can give. If there be nothing of heavenly fire and spiritual truth about our piety, our profession is vain. The great distinction between living grace and its imitation can be seen by all spiritual minds. We are overdone with portraits, but men are by no means plentiful. We have as many paintings of candles as the church-walls will hold; but we have few real lamps, or else this world would not remain so dark as it now is. Those candles which are not consumed by their own flame are giving no light, and those persons who are themselves unaffected in heart and life by their religion, may fear that they are mocking themselves with the mere appearance of sacred things. You may sit a long time in front of a painted fire before you will be warmed, and you may long maintain formal religion, and yet never derive comfort from it. To look for a lost ring in a dark cellar by the help of the picture of a candle, is not more unreasonable than to look for rest of heart in a godliness which is a mere pretence.

Our third emblem is not a candle, but a

case for candles, a casket for those jewels of light. Look well at this curiosity, ye dwellers in cities; for I do not suppose that any of you have such a piece of furniture in your houses.



It is a candle-box, well-fashioned and neatly japanned. Here at the back are two plates with holes in them by which to hang up the box against the wall. It closes very neatly, opens very readily, and keeps its contents out of harm's way. I can assure you that I have within it a number of the very best candles, from the most notable makers. Wax, stearine, palmatine, and so forth: there could not be a handsomer assortment than I

now exhibit to you. Let no one despise this display: here we have capacity, elegance, preparation, and plenty of each. But suppose that we were in this room without the gas, and I were simply to exhibit the candle-box and its contents, and say, "Here is brilliance! You need no electric lighting: this box abundantly suffices for the enlightenment of this large assembly!" You would reply, "But we see none the better for your boasted illumination. The candles are shut up in their box, and yield no single beam of light." Herein detect a resemblance to many a church. We could readily find communities of Christian people, who are shut up to themselves, and are without the living fire of the Spirit of God. What is the good of them?

This is a very respectable candle-box; is it not? It could hardly be more respectable. Even so, yonder is a highly respectable congregation! Very refined and select! The minister is a "man of high culture and advanced thought." He can confound a text of Scripture with any living man. He attracted at least five horses to his place of preaching last Sunday. They say it takes a great deal of ability to draw a horse to church! As for his

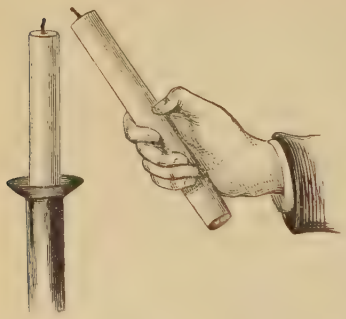
hearers, they are all the cream of the cream. Don't you know that the doctor, and the brewer, and the lawyer, and the auctioneer all attend that most honoured sanctuary? What with an M.D., and a D.D., and an F.R.S., two wealthy dowagers, a Colonel, a County-Council-man, and a Professor, it is worth while for a fellow to go to that chapel—I beg pardon—*church*, for the sake of the social distinction which it will bestow upon him. The people are so very respectable that they do not know one another, and never think of shaking hands. They are all so very select, that they float about in distinguished isolation, like so many icebergs in the Atlantic. The families walk up the aisles with the most becoming dignity, and they walk down the aisles with the most proper decorum. They can do without warmth, brotherly love, sympathy, and co-operation; for their eminent "respectability" suffices for every need. Of course, they can do nothing more; for it costs them all their time, talent, thought, and spare cash to maintain their superior respectability. Like the gentleman with his well-brushed hat, no wonder that they look so superior, for they give their whole minds to it.

One asked a member of a certain respectable church whether he taught in a Ragged School, and *weally* he could hardly answer the fellow. The superior person champed the word "Ragged School" as a donkey might a roll of oakum. Another, a portly deacon, was asked whether he would join in holding an open-air service; but he looked the intruder through and through as if he would like to open *him*. None of the ladies and gentlemen help the Temperance work, for they are too respectable to go in with vulgar water-drinkers; neither do they visit the lodging-houses, for that would be too disreputable for their royal highnesses. All these make up an eminently respectable community; but why they are respected, this deponent sayeth not.

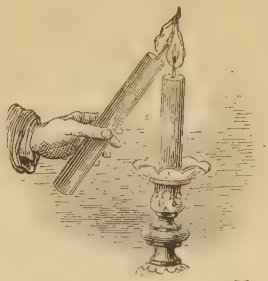
Here, take away this candle-box! I want no more of it or its contents, for it gives no jot of light! That is what will happen to very respectable churches which do no work for God or man: they will be put away, and even their candlestick will be taken out of its place. If they do not mend their ways, not a few of our dissenting churches will die out, and leave nothing behind them but a name to laugh at. A church which does

nothing for those around it, mocks the need of men, leaves the world in darkness, and grieves the Lord who designed his people to be the lights of the world.

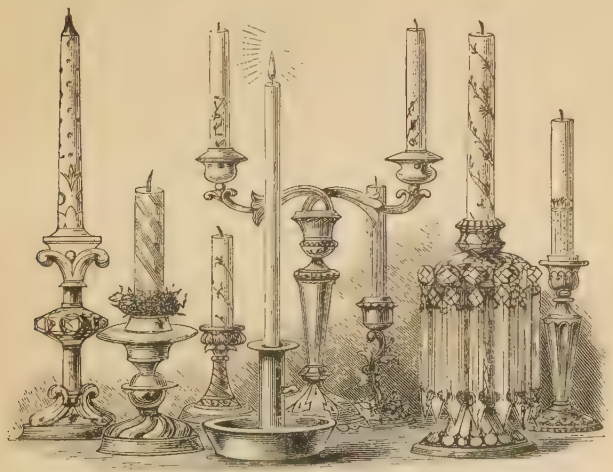
As in a community, so with a single person; grace is essential to usefulness. All the candles in that box remain useless till the wick is lighted with a touch of fire; and this lone candle is equally so. See, I bring another candle in contact with it. They are *tête-à-tête*, or wick-à-wick, but the first has no influence upon the second. A thousand such interviews will produce no result. If there were a living flame here, you could soon set not only this one candle shining, but as many as you chose to bring; but without it nothing can be done. No man can communicate what he has not got: you cannot hope to save your fellow-man till you know the salvation of God for yourself. To be a preacher or teacher before one has received the divine life, is as foolish as for



a candle to set up for a lighter of others before it has been lighted itself. How different the result when the living flame is there! See how the one sets the other on a blaze at once!



I see before me quite an array of candles. Variety is charming, and number is cheering. The more the merrier, and especially of such reputable and notable light-givers as these.

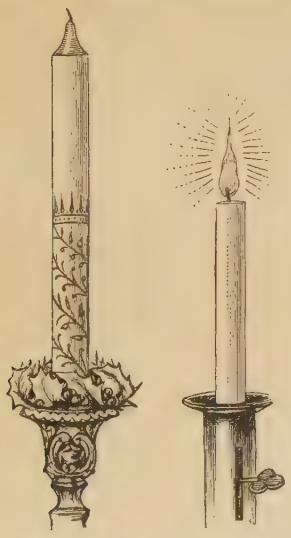


We may consider that we are having quite

an illumination. With so many luminaries we need hardly regret the set of sun. But is it so? I, for one, am none the better for these promising lights; are you? I put on my spectacles. But there is no improvement. I can see nothing; and yet there are candles enough and to spare! There is no mystery about it—the candles are not lighted; and until they are lighted they cannot remove our darkness. Grace is needed to make gifts available for the service of God.

Let us look more closely into our collection of lights. Here is one which I should suppose to be an archbishop at the least. This specimen is a Doctor of Divinity. *These* are gentry, and these are merchants, and those are "cultured" individuals; but without the light from on high they are all equally unserviceable. A poor converted lad in a workshop will be of more spiritual use than a parliament of unregenerate men. I introduce to you a lighted rushlight, and there is more to be seen by *this* ignoble luminary than by all the rest. Little ability, set on fire by the life of God, may produce greater results than ten talents without the divine power. "A living dog is better than

a dead lion" : a zealous but illiterate Christian may be worth twenty lifeless philosophers.



Herein is great encouragement, dear friends, that if you once get a light, it will spread from one to another without end. This one lighted candle would suffice to set a hundred candles shining. It may light a much finer candle than itself. Fire is one of those things for which there is no accounting as to what may come of it. Its spread is not to be measured even by leagues when it once gets firm hold, and the wind drives it on. Piety in a cottage may enlighten a nation. If the church of God were reduced to one person, it might, within an incredibly short time, become a great multitude.

There is a true apostolical succession in the kingdom of grace. Office has the pretence of it, but grace gives the reality. At Mr. Jay's

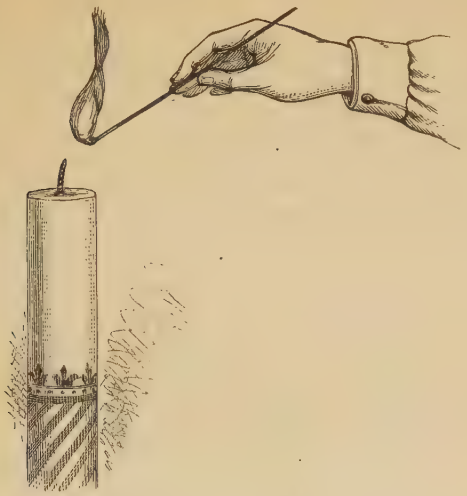
Jubilee, Timothy East, of Birmingham, told how, by the youthful ministry of William Jay, a thoughtless youth was converted and became a minister. Under the preaching of that man, Timothy East himself was led to repentance; and then by a sermon from Timothy East, John Williams, who became the martyr of Erromanga and the apostle of the South Sea Islands, was savingly impressed. See how the light goes from Jay to another, from that other to East, from East to Williams, and from Williams to the savages of the Southern Seas!

A family tree of an equally interesting character has been traced with regard to books as surely as with living witnesses for God. A Puritan tract, old and torn, was lent by a poor man to Baxter's father. It was called *Bunny's Resolutions*. Through reading this little book, Richard Baxter, afterwards the great preacher of Kidderminster, received a real change of heart. Baxter wrote *The Saint's Everlasting Rest*, which was blessed to the conversion of Doddridge. He wrote *The Rise and Progress*, which was the means of the conversion of Legh Richmond, and he wrote his *Dairyman's Daughter*, which has been

translated into more than fifty languages, and has led to the conversion of thousands of souls. How many of these converted ones have in their turn written books and tracts which have charmed others to Jesus, eternity alone will reveal. We can never see the issues of our acts. We may strike a match, and from that little flame a street may be lighted. Give a light to your next door neighbour, and you may be taking the nearest way to instruct the twentieth century, or to send the gospel to Chinese Tartary, or to overthrow the popular science fetish of the hour. A spark from your kitchen candle may, in its natural progression from one to another, light the last generation of men; so the word of the hour may be the light of the age, by which men may come in multitudes to see their Saviour and Lord. Let thy light shine, and what will come of it thou shalt see hereafter.

Coming one Thursday in the late autumn from an engagement beyond Dulwich, my way lay up to the top of the Herne Hill ridge. I came along the level out of which rises the steep hill I had to ascend. While I was on the lower ground, riding in

a hansom cab, I saw a light before me, and when I came near the hill, I marked that light gradually go up the hill, leaving a train of stars behind it. This line of new-born stars remained in the form of one lamp, and then another, and another. It reached from the foot of the hill to its summit. I did not see the lamplighter. I do not know his name, nor his age, nor his residence; but I saw the lights which he had kindled, and these remained when he himself had gone his way. As I rode along I thought to myself, "How earnestly do I wish that my life may be spent in lighting one soul after another with the sacred flame of eternal life! I would myself be as much as possible unseen while at my work, and would vanish into the eternal brilliance above when my work is done." Will you, my brother, begin to light up some soul to-night? Speak of Jesus to some person who knows him not. Who can tell, but you may save a soul from death? Then carry the flame to another, and to another. Mark the years of your life by your continual diligence in spreading "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."



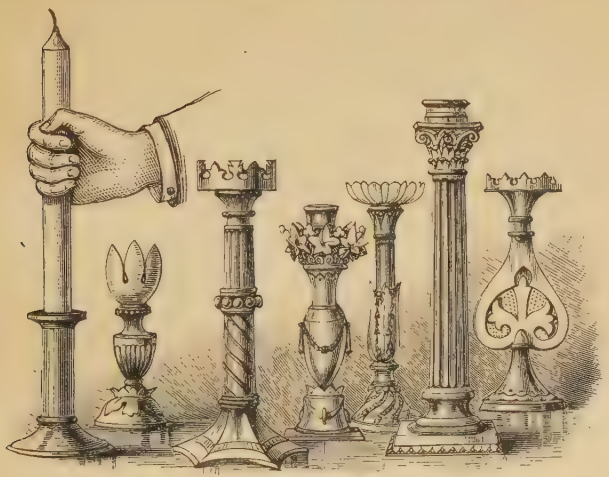
The taper which I hold in my hand is in itself a poor thing as an illuminator, but it has created quite a splendour in the room by the light which it has communicated to others. Andrew was not a very great personage, but he called his brother Peter, and led him to Jesus, and Peter was a host in himself. Never mind how small a taper you may be; burn on, shine at your best, and God bless you. You may lead on to grand results despite your feebleness. He that called Dr. John Owen is forgotten: I might almost say was never known: he was a small taper—but what a candle he lighted!

Those holy women who talked together as they sat in the sun at Bedford were a blessing to John Bunyan; but we know not the name of even one of them. Everywhere the hidden ones are used of the Lord as the means of lighting up those who shine as stars in the churches.

In the service of God we find the greatest expansion of our being. It makes the dead man speak, and it also makes a single living man spread himself over a province. Our forefathers were fond of riddles. I cannot say that they were very witty ones, but there was solidity in them. Here is one—What is that of which twenty could be put into a tankard, and yet one would fill a barn? Twenty candles unlighted would scarce fill a jug; but one when it is lighted will beneficially fill a barn with light, or viciously fill it with fire and smoke. A man, what is he? A man of God, what is he not? Our influence may enlighten the world and shine far down the ages, if the Holy Spirit's fire shall kindle us.

Here is a candle which has never given any light yet, and never will as it now is. Hear its reason for not giving light! It is

so unfortunate that it cannot find a proper



candlestick, in which to stand upright and fulfil the purpose for which it was made. Let us try to accommodate it. Here is a fine church candlestick, and we set our candle in the socket. Does it shine? No. Shall we try a lower place? It does not shine any better. We will put this candle in the most enviable position—in this real silver candlestick, of the most elaborate workmanship. It does not shine one whit the more. Neither high nor low places will make a man what he is not.

I know persons who cannot get on anywhere; but, according to their own belief,

the fault is not in themselves, but in their surroundings. I could sketch you a brother who is unable to do any good because all the churches are so faulty. He was once with *us*, but he came to know us too well, and grew disgusted with our dogmatism and want of taste. He went to the Independents who have so much more culture, breadth, and liberality. He grew weary of what he called "cold dignity." He wanted more fire, and therefore favoured the Methodists with his patronage. Alas! he did not find them the flaming zealots he had supposed them to be: he very soon outgrew both them and their doctrines, and joined our most excellent friends, the Presbyterians. These proved to be by far too high and dry for him, and he became rather sweet upon the Swedenborgians, and would have joined them had not his wife led him among the Episcopalians. Here he might have enjoyed the *otium cum dignitate;* have taken it easy with admirable propriety; and have even grown into a churchwarden; but he was not content; and before long I heard that he was an Exclusive Brother! There I leave him, hoping that he may be better in his

new line than he has ever been in the old ones. "The course of nature could no further go": if he has not fallen among a loving, united people now, where will he find them? Yet I expect, that as Adam left Paradise, so will he ultimately fall from his high estate. He reminds me of a very good man who changed his religious views so often, that I once asked him, "What are you now?" He told me, and I went on my way; but when I met him next, and made the same inquiry, he was something else. At our next meeting my reverend brother was grieved because I said to him the third time, "What are you now?" He reproved me for it; but when I somewhat impenitently repeated the query, and pressed it home, I found that he really had entered another denomination since I had last seen him. What a pity that the churches should be so bad, that when a man has gone the complete round he finds none which quite comes up to his mark! If some of these brethren go on their way to heaven alone, they will increase the heaven below of those who are not forced to put up with them.

The same illustration suggests to me to

ask you whether you know the young man who cannot serve God as an apprentice, but is going to do wonders when he is out of his time? Yes, he only wants to be put into another candlestick. So he thinks: but we know better. When he is out of his time, and has become a journeyman, he will postpone his grand plans of usefulness till he has started as a master on his own account. Alas! when he is a master, he will wait till he has made money and can retire from business. So, you see, the candle does not shine, but it imputes its failure to the candlesticks! The candlesticks are not to be blamed.

Poor Dick Miss-the-Mark believes that he ought to have been Oliver Cromwell; but as that character is hardly in season in this year of grace, Richard is unable to be Cromwell, and therefore he is not himself at all. That wart over the eye, and other Cromwellian distinctions, are a dead loss in his case. He cannot develop his genius for want of a King Charles and a Prince Rupert. The proper candlestick is not forthcoming, and so this fine candle cannot shine.

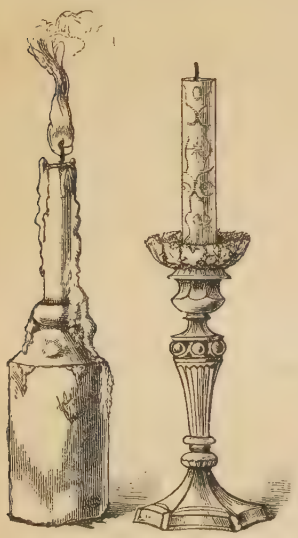
This is a very simple affair—Field's Self-fitting Candle; but it is very handy. You see,

owing to the shape of its lower end, the candle will fit into any candlestick, whether it be large or small. A man of this sort makes himself useful anywhere. In poverty he is content; in wealth he is humble. Put him in a village, and he instructs the ignorant; place him in a city, he seeks the fallen. If he can preach, he will do so; and if that is beyond his capacity, he will teach in the Sabbath-school. Like the holy missionary Brainerd, if he cannot convert a tribe, he will, even on his dying bed, be willing to teach a poor child his letters. It is a great thing not only to be able to fit in to all kinds of work, but to cope with all sorts of people. The power of adaptation to high and low, learned and ignorant, sad and frivolous, is no mean gift. If, like Nelson, we can lay our vessel side by side with the enemy, and come to close quarters without delay, we shall do considerable execution. Commend me to the man who can avail himself of any conversation, and any topic, to drive home saving truth upon the conscience and heart. He who can ride a well-trained horse, properly saddled, does well;

but the fellow who can leap upon the wild horse of the prairie, and ride him bare-backed, is a genius indeed. "All things to all men", rightly interpreted, is a motto worthy of the great apostle of the Gentiles, and of all who, like him, would win souls for Jesus.

It is a pity when a man is too big for his position—as some candles are too big to fit in certain candlesticks. Don't I know some Jacks-in-office who are a world too great to be of the slightest use to anybody? Don't ask them a question unless you desire to be eaten up alive. On the other hand, it is not pretty to see a candle with paper round it to keep it in its place; nor is it nice to see a little man padded out to make him fill up an important office. Some men in prominent positions are like the small boy on the high horse; they need a deal of holding on. Be fit for your office, or find one for which you are fit. It is not a very great invention to make a candle self-fitting, but the result is very pleasant. Though the expression, "the right man in the right place", is said to be a tautology, I like it, and I like best of all to see it in actual life. Try to fit yourself to whatever comes in your way.

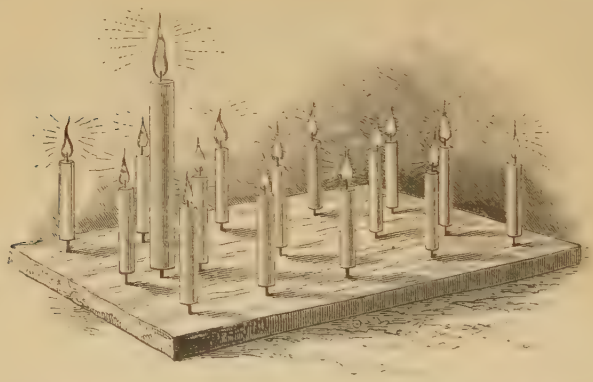
Hearty service, rendered from pure motives, is acceptable to God, even when persons of education and taste have just cause to find fault with its imperfections. If we cannot bear witness for the gospel in grammatical language, we may be thankful that we can do it at all, and we may be encouraged by the unquestionable fact that God blesses the most unpolished utterances. When you go to do a bit of carpentering in the shed, and need a light, you are sometimes on the look-out for the means of setting up your bit of candle in a handy way. Here is the great invention in which your researches usually end. You see I have stuck a candle into a ginger-beer bottle, and the light which comes from it is quite as clear as if I had a fine plated candlestick. Here is a popular implement, and it is both handy and cheap.



Who would find any fault with it if he were in the dark, and wanted to find something in a hurry? If you have no fitter candlestick, a ginger-beer bottle does mightily well. How often our Lord has used men of scanty education, or of none at all! How useful he has made the things which are despised! Yet, at the same time, if it were left to me to make my choice as to how I would have my candle set up, I should not object to have it in a more presentable stand. I would not quarrel even if the candle given to me to go to bed with were in a silver candlestick. For use I would sooner have a ginger-beer bottle with a bright candle in it than a plated candlestick with a dead candle in it which I could not light. Who would object to be rid of the guttering and the hot dropping tallow, and to handle a concern which would not dirty his hands? A thing of beauty and of brightness is a joy for ever. Grace shines none the less because the person and his speech are graceful. The world, with its Board Schools, is getting more and more educated, and the rage for ginger-beer-bottle lights is not so great as it was. We have now passed beyond the age in which vulgarity and power

were supposed to be nearly related. As there is no sin, that I know of, in grammatical language and good taste, I hope we shall never set a fictitious value upon coarseness, nor go out of our way to marry godliness with slang. Our Lord and his cause should be served with our best. Even our best is not of itself worthy of his glory; but at least let us not give to him the offal and the refuse of human speech. Young man, blaze away; but you need not be coarse. Bring us a light, but use a decent candlestick if you can.

Some excellent persons have very little talent indeed. It is not merely that there is a want of education, but there is a want of capacity. Now, when that happens to be the case, my next illustration may be a serviceable hint. On this board we have fixed a number of very small candles; and as they are all well alight, the result is by no means unsatisfactory. As a company of illuminators they make a pleasant and notable shining, and I note that the children present are greatly pleased with their brightness. Let us observe how a number of good little people, well lighted by grace,



can, by combination, really give out a great deal more illumination than far greater persons who shine alone. If one of you cannot do much in a place by yourself, look up other friends, start a Sunday-school, and all of you work together. You may do great things by earnest unity. Form a little army for preaching in the street. Band together to visit from house to house. Scatter tracts over the whole area by concerted action. Unity is light. Even children, youths, and maidens may make a great blaze by working together in the holy cause. But you must each one of you shine your quota, and no one must try to save his candle, and take things easy. All at it, and always at it, and you will not labour in

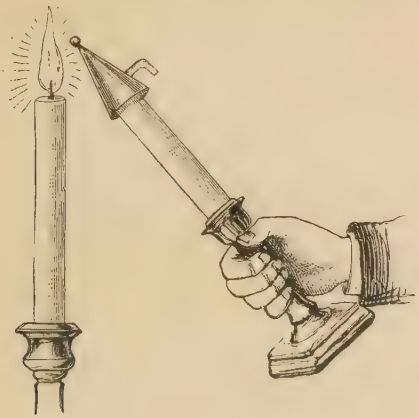
vain. Yonder great ecclesiastical candle has never given a tenth of the light of these little instruments; nor would he, I fear, if I were now to set him burning. The unanimous services of the lesser members of our churches might suffice to light up our country, and the world itself, by the blessing of God.

Still, if we had an equal number of larger candles, we should have a brighter blaze. How often have I wished that men of great parts, position, and wealth, were brought into the service of our Lord! Perhaps we do not pray sufficiently for them; or possibly, if we had them, we might place too much reliance upon them. Yet the soul of a gentleman of influence is as precious as that of a poor man; and we should know no difference of grades in our prayers. If any among my audience are endowed with ten talents, they have ten good reasons for yielding themselves to the service of God. How can they do better with themselves than by serving the purpose of their Creation and Redemption! May almighty grace bring in some who will be great lights in this dark age! We need men fitted to be leaders; may the Lord send them soon!

This candle hanging on the wall, all mouldy and perishing, may serve as a striking likeness of those who have done nothing for their God, or for their fellow-men. It is better to be consumed in shining than to perish ignominiously in doing nothing. I need scarcely quote the old proverb, "It is better to wear out than to rust out." Idleness is a destroyer. For every evil brought upon us by excessive labour, ten will come to us by laziness. Our accidents happen in our holidays. When the pot is not boiling the flies will come to it. Mice will not nibble a lighted candle; but when the fire is gone, they find tallow a rather toothsome article. Who cares to

be eaten by mice? Who wishes to die of the miserables? Who would like to be eaten up with whims, or nibbled away by crotchets? If we have no such desire, let us accept that sacred fire which will cause us to yield up our whole being to the hallowed purpose of light-giving. For this we are kept in this dark world. We must be burning and shining lights, or we miss our vocation. Truly, he that saves his life loses it, and only he who spends his life for God shall find it unto life eternal.

Have you ever heard of a person who, in real earnest, did the very foolish thing which I am attempting in pretence! I have a candle here, and I want to light it. What shall I do?



Before me I see a candle burning very brightly, and I will take a light from it for this other candle. I have not succeeded. How is it that I have altogether failed? I am of a very persevering turn of mind; I will give it a fair trial. I cannot succeed in lighting my candle, and you are all laughing at me, and you whisper that I must be over-much stupid to try to light a candle while an extinguisher is upon it. I subside. Do you not think that very many persons go with an extinguisher on to hear a minister preach? Listen to yonder young lady:—"Well, I will go to hear him, Mary Anne, because you press me, but I am sure I shall not like him." Is she not very like a candle covered with an extinguisher? *Why* our nameless friend does not like the preacher she has not told us; but probably her prejudice will be the more intense in proportion as she is unable to give a reason for it. Prejudice is a blind and deaf judge, who decides a case before he has seen or heard the evidence. "Hang them first, and try them afterwards," is one of his sage observations. Remember the old lines about unreasonable dislikes:—

"I do not like you, Dr. Fell,
The reason why I cannot tell;
But this I know, and know full well,
I do not like you, Dr. Fell."

Just so. That is a very effective extinguisher.

Our young lady friend showed the prejudice of ignorance, but there is such a thing as the prejudice of learning, and this is a very effectual extinguisher. Dr. Taylor, of Norwich, once said that he had read the Bible through—I think it was ten times—and he could not anywhere find the Deity of Christ in it. Honest John Newton observed, "Yes, and if I were to try ten times to light a candle with an extinguisher on it, I should not succeed." Once make up your mind to refuse a doctrine or a command, and you will not see it where God himself has written it as with a sunbeam. Kick against a truth, and the arguments for it will seem to have no existence. Let prejudice of any sort wholly cover the candle of your mind, and, whatever you do, there is no likelihood of your receiving the light. There are none so deaf as those who will not hear. The country people say that "some are like the hogs in harvest, that can hear and won't." Of course, hogs are deaf when they are called out of a field

where there is plenty to eat; and of course sinners are deaf when we bid them quit the pleasures of sin. This prejudice makes men totally blind. How can we perceive anything lovable where we have resolved to hate? How can we see even the sun itself when a dark body comes between us and him? How can men believe in the Lord Jesus when they are such great believers in themselves?

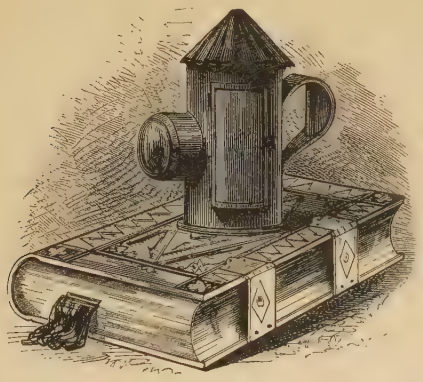
The only case in which I am willing to bear with prejudice is when a dislike of me leads people to watch the more carefully what I have to say. If they will during a sermon be wide awake that they may find fault, I will forgive their object out of respect to their action. Of all devils the worst is the devil of slumber. He haunts places of worship, and it is not easy to chase him away, especially in warm weather. I greatly fear lest my people should become so used to me, that like the miller, they can go to sleep all the easier for the grinding of the wheels—I mean, all the quicker for the sound of my voice. I have read of an old Scotchwoman who always went to sleep when her own minister was discoursing; but whenever there was a probationer from the college, she was noticed to watch

him as a cat would a rat. Her minister said to her, "Janet, you paid me a very poor compliment. You listened with opened ears and eyes to the young man last Sunday, but you went to sleep when I preached this morning." The canny old lady replied, "Dear sir, you do not understand the matter. You are so sound and solid that I feel all is safe when you have got it in hand, and so I may take my rest. As to those young fellows, I do not know where they may go, and so I am bound to keep awake and watch them." Be so kind as to be similarly suspicious of me, and watch me in the same way. You may find out my weak points; and it is not improbable that I may do the like for you. At any rate, I hope that more good may come of it than if you diverge into a snore, as some are reported to have done. This is the only case which I remember in which prejudice is likely to be of use to anyone.

Butchers, it seems, are accustomed to do their work with a candle fastened upon their foreheads in this fashion. As I am not one of those gentlemen "who kills his own", you will excuse me if I have not managed the affair in an orthodox manner. There is

an old story of one who had lost his candle, and travelled all round his premises searching for it by its own light. It is told as a jest, and it must have been a mirthful incident where it happened. I remember an old gentleman who could see very little without spectacles, but went up and down the house searching for his glasses, looking through them all the time. The parable is this: a person full of doubts and fears about his personal condition before God is searching for grace within, by the light of that very grace for which he is looking. He is fearfully anxious because he can see no trace of gracious anxiety in his mind. He feels sad because he cannot feel sad. He repents because he cannot repent. He has the candle on his forehead, and is seeing by the light of it, and yet he is searching for that very light, without which he could not search at all. Many a time a man laments that he does not feel, and all the while

he is overwhelmed with pain through the impression that he does not feel pain as he should.



This bull's-eye lantern may be used as an illustration of how persons may have the best of light and fail to use it. See, I have shut it up, and no ray of light comes from it. I am told that, when the Bible Society first started, its agents were very diligent in calling round to see whether householders had Bibles or not. One of them called upon an aged person and said, "Please, madam, have you a Bible?" The excellent lady was astonished, not to say indignant, that persons should dare to come round, insulting respectable Christian people, and asking them

whether they had a Bible. Of course she had a Bible. She would let the visitor see it with his own eyes, and then he would not think her a heathen any longer. "Mary, go upstairs and fetch the Bible from off the drawers, and let the gentleman see the large family Bible which my father left me." The volume was brought down, and laid upon the table; and when it was put on its back, it opened itself naturally at a certain place. "Ah!" said the venerable lady, "well, after all, I think there is a providence in your coming; for here are my spectacles which I lost years ago, and I could not imagine where they were." If she had not possessed a Bible, she would have thought herself a heathen; but, having a Bible and never reading it, she thought herself an exemplary Christian. Bibles which are never read are like lanterns which are never turned on. How shall we answer for our neglect at the last great day?

There is plenty of light in this lantern, but nobody sees anything of it; and here we have the portrait of many religious people who keep their knowledge to themselves. Oh, no, they never mention it; its name is never

heard; they are tongue-tied professors. They pride themselves upon having plenty of Gospel light, but they never let out a ray; they never say a word for Jesus to the souls around them. Perhaps they think that their example is too valuable to need a word to be added to it; like the bell which was made of metal too precious to have a tongue put in it, and so could never be made to ring. Some folks are quite sullen in keeping themselves to themselves. If we try to turn on their bull's-eye, as I sometimes do, they are just a little hot, as this lantern has become. We have to mind how we handle them, or we shall burn our fingers. One who was gently spoken to, and urged to help a needy cause, replied crustily, "What I gives is nothing to nobody." Unconscious truth, no doubt, but said in a nasty way, making you feel as if you had tumbled backward upon a circular saw. It is my business to attempt with members of the church to turn on the light which is now shut up; and I hope you will therefore bear with my personalities, and not give me a warmer reception than you can help—I refer to the kind of warmth which comes through a hot temper. Suffer me to

exhort you. Is it not the Lord's will that you should shine? Is it not for your own comfort? May there not be souls waiting in the dark till you bring them the knowledge of the Saviour? Will you not remember Heber's missionary hymn, and practise its lesson?—

> "Can we whose souls are lighted
> With wisdom from on high,
> Can we to men benighted,
> The lamp of life deny?"

Some seem to have a great capacity for denying light to their fellows. I have known persons almost glory in their reticence with their own children. "I never spoke to him about religion," was the complacent confession of an old professor as to his son. Some of these hide away in the dark themselves, lest they should be called upon to work. A prospectus of a Burial Club began, "Whereas many persons find it difficult to bury themselves." Alas! to my knowledge many persons bury themselves most easily, and one of my constant labours is to fetch them out of the sepulchre of their indolence. I wish they would respond to my call, and not lie in their coffins and grumble at my disturbing them. Again, dark lantern, I must turn you on!

When we get the lantern pouring forth its brightness, or begin in earnest to study the Word of God, how cheering is the light! No man shall walk in darkness, who uses the clear shining of revelation. By this he shall see treasures, detect enemies, and discern his way. I am pleased to see Christian people like lanterns fully turned on. Should not our town and our age get all the light from us that we can possibly give? A friend who sits in one of the best seats, and is the owner of more than half a million of money, and puts a shilling into a collection, wants turning on to the full. A lady yonder, who has a first-rate education and remarkable fluency of speech, and yet has no work in the Sunday-school, or in the Bible Classes, wants her light turned on also.

And so does my friend, Mr. Candoit, who, as yet, has more capacity for work than experience in it: when I think of what he might be doing, I am inclined to turn on to him to turn him on. However, I remember how hot I found the bull's-eye lantern just now, and I will let him alone. I do not wish to *drive* anyone into a service so honourable. In all gracious work give me spontaneous combustion. Those who do not wish to give light will never do so. So good-bye, dark lanterns! Before I quite part with you, I bequeath you this motto, ARISE! SHINE!

Here is a common lantern. The wind may blow, but the candle is safe within. The groom can cross the stable-yard in a shower of rain, or in a fall of snow, when his light is thus safeguarded. On board ship also, the

lantern is of the utmost use; for even a gale of wind will not blow out the candle which is secure in a good lantern.

Surely God will preserve his own Gospel, though Popes and monks, men of "modern thought", and theoretical scientists, blow at its candle with all the fury of fiends. Burn on, O sacred light, that by thee men may be guided to the haven of rest! Bright Pharos of the sea of time, thou Cross of Christ, cast thy splendour over stormy waves, and warn passing mariners to shun the iron-bound coasts of error!

The Providence of God is the great protector of our life and usefulness, and under the divine care we are perfectly safe from every danger.

> "Plagues and deaths around me fly;
> Till He please I cannot die:
> Not a single shaft can hit
> Till the God of love thinks fit."

Yet we are apt to complain of the very providence which blesses us. Years ago a farmer returned from market with a golden burden, for he had sold his corn. He thought it hard that it should rain and spoil his best coat; but when he came to the lone place

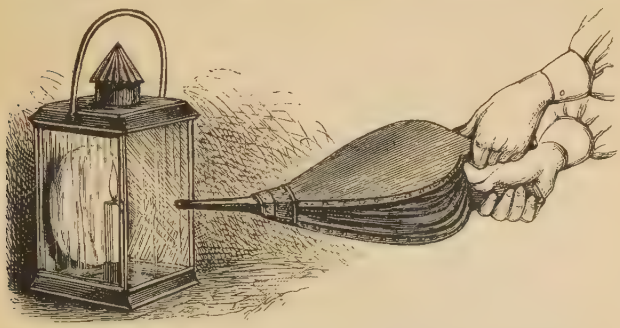
between the woods, and perceived that a highwayman would have shot him if the rain had not damped his powder, he had a much more vivid idea of the wisdom of God.

Remember *Bernard Gilpin*, the apostle of the North. He was seized and taken to London to be tried as a heretic. On the road he fell from his horse, and broke his leg. His persecutors knew that his wont was to say, "It is all for the best"; so they taunted him with the enquiry, "Is this all for the best?" and he meekly replied that he had no doubt it would turn out to be so. Gilpin was right. A delay was caused on the road, and he and his guard arrived in London just as Queen Mary died. They heard the bells ringing when they came to Highgate Hill, and learned that Queen Elizabeth was on the throne. He was too late to be burned: he had broken his leg, but he had escaped the flames. In some way or other the Lord will preserve his people from all evil, even as the lantern preserves the light which is placed within it.

There is a still more happy preservation. "Preserved in Christ Jesus." What a precious word! A feeble life is secure when hidden away in Christ. He it is that guards us safe

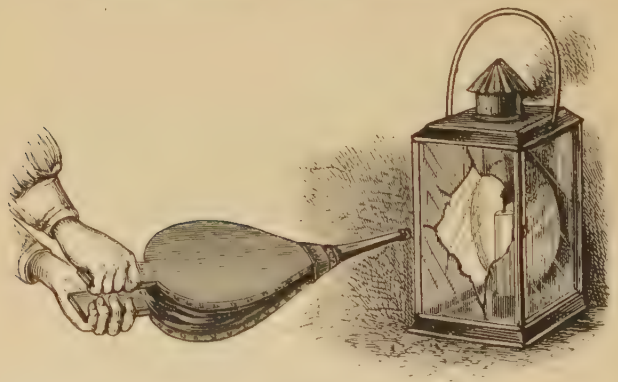
from every ill design. Neither the world, the flesh, nor the devil can blow out the flame which he has kindled, for he surrounds it with his own almighty grace. Even to eternity our light shall shine if we by faith are put into Christ.

But there are imitations of this security: there are confidences which are vain. A man may be so far a Christian as to be safe against the coarser vices; but yet the tempter may find out a place where he lies open to attack. My assistant will play the part of the tempter, and blow at this candle.



He has done no harm as yet, for the guardian lantern has covered the quarter upon which he has blown; but if he will try again, the result may be different. He may then hit upon the weak point. A man's religion may

save him from certain sins, but not from others. He may not perish by drink, but he may be ruined by "covetousness, which is idolatry": he may escape the pestilence of profanity, and be carried off by the fever of pride. In vain are we guarded in head and feet, if a poisoned arrow enters the breast. A candle in one of the old emblems is made to say, "I lie open only here"; but it is just there that the wind enters and blows it out. Where there is a weakness the arch-enemy will find it out and bring his force to bear; and as he is "the prince of the power



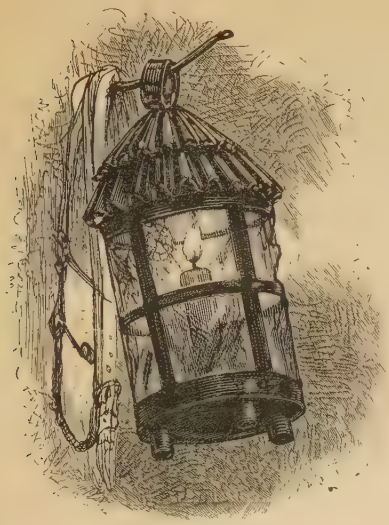
of the air", he can blow with a vengeance, and the man's candle is put out, because he had not found that perfect security which none

but the Lord Jesus Christ can give. Beware of trusting to good resolutions or outward religiousness: these are cracked lanterns. No man is safe out of Christ: he alone is the perfect protection of his people. "Ye are complete in him"; but in no one else.

I do not know whether I can manage so to blow out this candle as to light it again by the help of its own smoke and this taper. Yes, I have managed it; and it is a pretty experiment. See, the flame travels down the smoke, and lights the wick again. When a man has been a real Christian, if his light seems blown out he readily takes fire again, if he has not been long in an ill condition. He who stays from the House of God can be easily brought back if looked after at once. He that has known how to pray is soon

set praying again after an unhappy neglect, if he be taken soon. Never leave backsliders long; but with holy carefulness bring the holy fire to bear upon them as speedily as you can. The force of his former habit will aid you in restoring to the wanderer the religious feeling which had almost left him. The Lord Jesus is very tender in such cases; for "a smoking flax he will not quench." Let none of us be guilty of delays, lest the destruction of precious souls be laid at our door.

The same symbol will apply, on the other hand, to all forms of evil fire. It is no wonder that seeming converts so often and so speedily go back to old habits. You think their sin extinguished; but it is only the flame which is gone: the smoke of desire remains, and will soon catch fire again, and burn as strongly as before, if the flame of temptation is near. Oh, for grace to get that "fire of hell" snuffed out altogether! Let beginners in grace, in whom the flame of sin has been freshly blown out, beware of their old companions, and haunts, and habits; lest, going near the fire, their natural smoke of inclination should invite the flame of open transgression again to kindle upon them.



Here is a candle which is in a lantern of a tolerably respectable sort: at least, it was respectable long ago, and you might not now have noticed its forlorn condition if it had not been for the candle within. So soon as you place a light within, the imperfections of the lantern are shown up; and it is the same with human characters. Many a man would have seemed a decent sort of fellow if he had not professed to be a Christian; but his open confession of religion fixed many eyes upon him, and his imperfections were at once observed of all observers. He who unites with a church, and takes upon himself the name of Christ, claims a higher character than others; and if he is not true to his profession, his inconsistency is marked; and very justly

so. How often do we see that an unconverted man may steal a horse, but a Christian must not look over the hedge at it! That which is winked at in a man of the world, is a grave fault in a Christian. It is no more than natural and just that great professors should be expected to be better than others. It is inevitable that the very light they have should reveal their faults and flaws.

Brethren, let us not exhibit our candle in a dirty lantern, nor our religion in a doubtful character. I have heard of a minister who was a capital preacher, but he bought a wig of one of his hearers, and forgot to pay for it. A bad habit that! Not to pay at all, is worst of all; but even to be long-winded is objectionable. When the barber came home from the meeting he said, "That was a beautiful discourse; but his wig spoiled it. I like his deep expositions; but oh, that wig! Will he ever pay for that wig?" A friend who heard me tell this story remarked that "the wig stuck in the man's throat."

Let us pay for our wigs if we wear such inventions, and let us see to it that there is nothing else about our person or character which may bring the gospel into discredit.

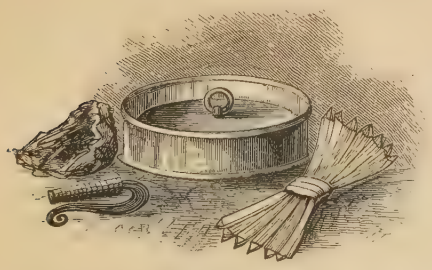
We have heard of a wonderful preacher, of whom they said that he preached so well and lived so badly, that when he was in the pulpit, they thought he ought never to come out of it; but when he was out of the pulpit, they changed their minds, and sorrowfully concluded that he ought never to go into it again. Every man should be clean—it is a natural, sanitary duty; but there is a special precept which says, "Be *ye* clean that bear the vessels of the Lord", and this relates to moral and spiritual character. An unholy minister is unclean with a vengeance. Prominent persons are looked at through microscopes. The more light you have, the more will your faults be shown up and observed.

In the case of this other lantern, little or no light would come from it, if it were not for its cracks and rents. The light passes through the broken places. Do you not think that the sicknesses and infirmities of many godly people have been the making of them, and that the light divine has gleamed through the rifts in their tenements of clay? Do not light-givers sometimes shine the better for sickness? Some ministers preach

the better for being afflicted. Do not wish your minister to be ill or to be tried; but I cannot doubt the fact that the trials of ministers are the best part of their education. One who was rather a critic in sermons used to ask, "Has the doctor been ill within the last six months? For he is not worth hearing else." An old Scotch woman found that when her minister lost his sight he could not read his dry old manuscripts, and was therefore forced to preach extemporaneously. Perhaps she was a little cruel when she said,

"Praise be to God. It would have been well if he had lost his sight twenty years ago." To her mind the sermons were so much better when they came forth from his heart than when he read them from the sapless manuscript that to her the good man's loss of sight was a gain. If, in any way, you are able to tell out a sweeter experience, and so afford greater comfort to others through your body being like a broken lantern, be thankful for it. Happy are we if our losses are the gains of others. So long as our soul shines out with holier radiance, we will glory in infirmities.

As adjuncts to a candle, we used to have



tinder-box, flint, steel, and certain brimstone matches. I am almost afraid to employ these implements as illustrations, for they are almost as much out of date as the flint arrow-heads of the prehistoric period. Few of you have ever struck a light with a flint in

your lives, though I hope you will all strike a light in some better sense.

Shall I instruct you in the practical science of getting a light with flint and steel? The first thing is to make your tinder, by burning or rather scorching a piece of rag. Toast it or char it till it is tenderly made into tinder. Neither do it too little, nor too much; cook your rags to a turn. Be very mindful to keep your tinder dry as a bone; for a spark will be of no service if it does not fall where it will be nourished; and the least damp will kill it. The sparks of temptation would be harmless if it were not for the tinder of corruption in our hearts. Good teaching is also lost unless it falls upon a mind prepared to receive it: so that the metaphor can be used either way.

Having secured your tinder, you had next to know how to strike your flint and steel so as to create sparks. Many a knock of the fingers would you get if you did not look alive. Possibly you would also bark your knuckles if you did know the art, if the weather was cold and your hands were half frozen. So is it in your dealing with men's consciences: you may give a hard knock

and fetch fire out of them, or you may break your own knuckles by bringing upon yourself personal ill-will.

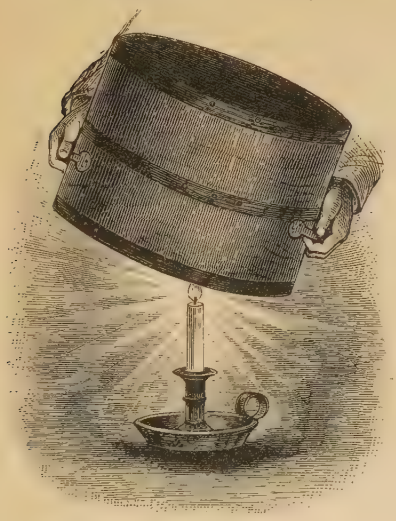
If you were so skilful or so fortunate as to cause a spark to drop into the tinder, you had to blow upon it very gently; just as the first sign of grace in any heart needs encouraging with the fostering breath of sympathy. How often have I seen a servant go down on her knees to blow at a coal which seemed to have a little life in it! Let us do the like with those persons concerning whom we are somewhat hopeful.

When the spark had become fairly prosperous in the tinder, then you applied the point of your brimstone match. You do not quite know what I mean. Well, mind you do not make a brimstone match when you get married. The brimstone, at the sharpened point of the match, would take fire when it touched the spark, and then your labour approached its reward. When you had your match flaming, and smelling, you lighted your candle; and having done with your elaborate apparatus, you popped the flat lid of the box upon the tinder to put it all out. This last operation of damping down resembles the behaviour of critics towards young

preachers and writers if they see a spark or two of fire in them. I know this illustration by heart, for I had the lid popped upon myself when I was a young spark. The work was not done very effectually; but this was not due to any want of fell intent on the part of my critics. I owe them much for which I feel no gratitude, because they meant me no good.

I found it very difficult to procure this ancient relic in London: indeed, I had to give up all idea of purchase, and this specimen was specially made to order. Be glad that now you have lucifers and vestas, to flame forth in an instant; for on a cold winter's morning it was tedious work to use this complicated instrumentality when it was in perfect condition, and many things might happen to make that condition imperfect, and render your labour fruitless. If you had the gout in your hand you could not strike the sparks; if the tinder was damp the sparks could not live; and if there happened to be no tinder, because you forgot to make it; or, if the matches were missing, you were done for. Three cheers for the good old times of tinder-boxes; may they never come back!

Let me set before you an admirable illustration, which is not one of my own, but comes from the great Master of assemblies. Here is a candle, and of course we have brought it with a view to its giving light, but the absurd action that I am bent upon is to cover it up with a bushel. It would be a very ridiculous thing to be at the pains of providing a lighted candle and then to hide it under a bushel. Yet I will do so to make the folly apparent to you all. I notice that you laugh; and well you may. You may use a bushel and use a candle; but by putting the candle under the bushel you use neither of them, but *mis*-use both. I am sure none of you would be guilty of such an absurd action. And can it be that even a



single person here would be so profane as to believe that the All-wise God would do that which we all condemn as folly? And yet, when those of you who have grace in your hearts profess to believe that you are placed where you can do no good, you virtually charge the Lord with lighting a candle and putting it under a bushel. Yonder is my respected brother, a working-man. Hear what he has to say:—"My dear Mr. Spurgeon,—You cannot expect me to be doing any work in the church, for my daily labour leaves me no time for anything else. I could call the larks up in the morning; I am often abroad before the world is properly aired. Moreover, I have to work much too late to leave me a spare hour. I am willing, but quite unable to do a hand's turn for my Lord." Yes, yes; I see: you have to complain of a bushel which hides your light. God has lighted you, and then has put you where your light is condemned to be unseen. Do you quite believe that it is so? Have you no suspicion that, after all, you could shine, if you were exceedingly anxious to do so?

"There"! cries another, "I have little

patience with a man who talks in that fashion; but as for me, I have hundreds of men to look after, and a great going concern, involving large capital, and this requires the whole of my energy both by day and by night. My cares are never over. Mine is brain-work of the most exhausting sort, and when I get away from the mill I feel no soul for reading, or prayer, or working in the cause of God. If it were hand labour, I should like the change to mental work; but I cannot keep on for ever thinking, or I shall soon wear out my brain." Just so, my friend: God has given you the light of his grace, and has then deliberately placed a great golden bushel over the top of you! Do you feel sure that it is so? Is there not a still small voice, which whispers that there is something wrong?

But my friend Mrs. Fruitful, over yonder, says: "I quite agree with you, sir. These people are not tied to their homes as I am, for I have eleven children; and what can I do? I have a great deal more to do than you men dream of; and it is no fiction that a mother's work is never ended. If anyone can plead a good excuse from the Lord's

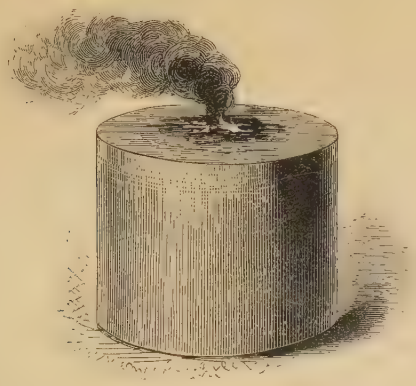
work, I am sure I can." Good sister, I sympathize with you, far more than with those who have already spoken. You have your share of life's burden in your large little family. It is true, eleven is better than so very many; but I have no doubt they are a handful, a lapful, and a heartful. Yet, surely, it cannot be quite true that you are altogether denied the pleasure of shining for your Lord; else it would seem as if he had kindled you as his own candle, and then had put you under the bushel of a large family, to prevent your shining.

Yet there is the candle, and there is the bushel. We cannot imagine that the bushel is to be on the top of the candle. Still, they must be in some relation to each other. If we must not put the candle under the bushel, would it be amiss to put

the bushel under the candle? See how well it looks! It is an admirable idea! Let us carry out its principle! Cannot the working-man talk to his mates, and be a witness for Jesus in the shop? Parsons are all very well, but holy artisans can carry the truth where we have no entrance! Cannot the great manufacturer see to the interests of those whom he employs, and treat them, not as "hands", but as souls? Might he not do a world of good among his mill people if he had but a mind? I think so. And you, good mother of those dozen children save one, surely you have a work ready to hand in your own house. What a splendid Sunday-school you have at home! Your children could not have a better teacher; and, from what little I know of them, I should say that you could not have much finer children to instruct. You will not be forced to walk weary miles to get to your class, nor will you be tempted to neglect your house: you can stay at home and train for God valuable church-members, fine workers among the poor, and soul-winning missionaries for the home and foreign field. What nobler work can there be than that of a mother among

her own little ones? See how, by being set upon the bushel, the candle stands in a place of vantage, and obtains a worthy pedestal from which to spread its light far and wide! Wisely used, that which would hinder the idle will assist the diligent. This is one of the feats of faith, to turn difficulties into helps, to slay the lion and find honey in his carcase, and thus, on stepping-stones of growing victory, rise to complete triumphs.

If there be real light in a man, you cannot keep him under a bushel. You may try to repress a man of talent, but he finds his level in due time. You may endeavour to destroy real grace when you meet with it among men; but neither you nor the devil will succeed. If you manage to place the gracious soul under a sort of bushel, something will happen for which you were not looking. If there is the real life of God within the person who is despised and covered up, the flame will find out a way for the revelation of the light. Grace may be oppressed; but it cannot be suppressed. In fact, it may be said of persecuted believers as of Israel in Egypt, "The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew." See the covered candle



burns the bushel. No, it is not a bushel! It turns out to be a mere band-box. The light must, and will, burn its own way, and do its own work. That which is in a man will sooner or later come out. The genius that is in the man, and still more the spiritual life that is in him, will shine forth to the praise and glory of God; and there is no stopping it. I have heard of a gentleman who said he had learned to conceal his religion; and he believed that you might live in his house for a twelvemonth and never discover what his religion was. This he boasted of till one told him that he had lived two years in a man's house, and had never seen the colour of his money, for he was too poor to have any.

This is not technically called a candle, but in effect it is one. A night-light is a delightful invention for the sick. It has supplanted the rushlight, which would frequently be set in a huge sort of tower, which, to me, as a sick child at night, used to suggest dreadful things. With its light shining through the round holes at the side, like so many ghostly eyes, it looked at me staringly; and with its round ring on the ceiling, it made me think of Nebuchadnezzar's burning fiery furnace. The night-light is so mild and quiet that it suits our weakness, and yet cheers our gloom. Blessed be the Child who first thought of it! Does it not remind you of a good, tender nurse? I always say—as a fine specimen of what I mean—my wife. She tells me that I cannot say this of her now, as she is so great an

invalid; but I can speak of what she has been, and would be now if strength sufficed. She has been far more than a night-light to me in hours of pain. She moves across the room like the ancient deities, who were said to float rather than to walk. What gentle grace and tenderness! What unwearied watchfulness all through the night!

Do you remember the old charwoman nurse? Was her name Sarah Gamp or Betsy Prig? One evening, when you were supposed to be asleep, you saw her, in the glass, stirring your gruel, and she took a pinch of snuff right over the cup, to regale her lovely nose. No: you did not take your gruel like a man; your stomach turned at the mess and at the creature who had stirred in the droppings of her snuff. Her voice was hoarse; she stamped with her two beetle-crushers when she traversed the room; she made your pillow hard when she shook it up; and she seemed an ogre in your eyes. The only good point about her was that you got well all the quicker, that you might escape from her clutches.

Honoured among women be the memory of *Florence Nightingale!* Her name and fame

gave an impetus to the movement for trained nurses, which has been so fraught with comfort to thousands. Our young ladies who devote themselves to this sacred service deserve all the encouragement we can give them. God bless you, gentle night-lights!

Our night-light is set in water to make it quite safe. We do well to guard ourselves against the personal dangers of our position: even when doing good we must be on our watch lest we fall into temptation.

Night-lights are marked to burn just so many hours, and no more; and so are we. Long may you each one shine and yield comfort to those around you; but, whether your hours be few or many, may you burn steadily to the end! If we may but fulfil our mission it will be enough. May none of us take fire in a wrong way, blaze into a shameful notoriety, fill the air with an ill savour, and then go out in darkness ere half our work is done!

There is room for fresh forms of candle still, and we should not wonder if the article once more became the subject of advertising, as soap is at present. In other lands, as, for instance, on the north-west coast of America,

candles have a singular originality about them; for there they burn a fish, a species of smelt, which grows nearly a foot long and is full of fat. We should rather think the smelt smelleth, when they put a rush or a piece of bark down the centre of him, and make a natural candle of him. The light must be rather fishy; but so is everything else in that region, and therefore it does not matter much.

There is, in China and the East Indies, a candle fly; but though it bears the name, we do not suppose that it serves the purpose of a candle. We have heard of reading by the light of glow-worms in our hedges, but we doubt whether ordinary type could thus be deciphered. Glow-worms remind us of most expositors, of whom Young says,

> "The commentators each dark passage shun,
> And hold their failing candles to the sun."

Fire-flies might serve our turn better, for they are like living lamps. They had a great charm for us when we saw them for the first time by the Italian lakes. The night-light is a sober night-comforter: may it be long before any of you learn its value in long hours of suffering!

Here is a candle which is as good as candle can well hope to be. The light is clear and pure. Speaking popularly, the candle is *perfect*, and is giving forth a bright light. Yet, if you knew it better, you would take another view of it. It is disseminating black smoke as well as clear light. Here is a sheet of bright tin plate. Just hold it over the candle, and you will see that it is yielding something other than light. Of course, there will be nothing on the bright tin but that which comes out of the candle.

Will one of you be so good as to put his finger on this tin, and then touch the tip of his nose and his forehead with it? I cannot persuade any of you to try the effect; but if you did so, you would prove to us all that the best of candles does not yield unmingled light. I am told that a man may be perfect. Well—no doubt we ought to be so, and in the Biblical sense I hope many are so. But if all possible tests were applied to them, a measure of imperfection would be found in the brightest of the saints. It is as old Master Trapp says, "We may be perfect, but not perfectly perfect." Grace makes us perfect after our kind; but only in glory will the last remains of sin be altogether removed.

I should not care to be like this sheet of tin, used to expose the faults of others, when it would be better to leave them unnoticed. Some peeping Toms have the gift of detecting the imperfections of good men: I do not covet their talent. In the process, these prying folk, like this tin, grow very sooty themselves. Do not attempt to imitate them.

In the next similitude you have a simpler reminder of the imperfections to which men are liable. A candle needs snuffers, and men

need chastisements; for they are both of them

subject to infirmity. In the temple of Solomon there were snuffers and snuff-dishes; but *they were all of gold.* God's rebukes are in love, and so should ours be: holy reproofs in the spirit of affection are snuffers of gold. Never use any other, and use even these with discretion, lest you put out the flame which it is your aim to improve. Never reprove in anger. Do not deal with a small fault as if it were a great crime. If you see a fly on your boy's forehead, don't try to kill it with a sledge-hammer, or you may kill the boy also. Do the needful but very difficult work of reproof in the kindest and wisest style, so that the good you aim at may be attained.

It was a shocking habit of bad boys to snuff the candle, and then open the snuffers and let the smoke and the smell escape. The snuffers are made on purpose to remove the snuff, or consumed wick, and then to quench

it by pressure, and prevent any offensive smoke; but young urchins of a mischievous sort would set the snuffers wide and let the filthy smoke fill the room with its detestable odour. So do some who hear of a brother's faults, make them known, and seem to take pleasure in filling society with unsavoury reports. I pray you, do not so. If the candle has something wrong with it, touch it carefully, snuff it with discretion, and shut up the obnoxious matter very carefully. Let us be silent about things which are a discredit to Christian character. Keep an ill report secret; and do not be like the young lady who called in a dozen friends to help her keep a secret, and yet, strange to say, it got out. Remember, you may yourself deserve rebuke one of these days; and as you would like this to be done gently and privately, so keep your remarks upon others within the happy circle of tender love. To rebuke in gentle love is difficult, but we must aim at it till we grow proficient. GOLDEN snuffers, remember; only *golden* snuffers. Put away those old rusty things—those unkind sarcastic remarks. They will do more harm than good, and they are not fit things to be handled by servants of the Lord Jesus.

See how precious material runs to waste if the light is not trimmed! There is a thief in the candle, and so it takes to guttering and running away, instead of yielding up its substance to be used for the light. It is sad when a Christian man has some ill habit, or sinister aim. We have seen fine lives wasted through a love of wine. It never came to actual drunkenness, but it lowered the man and spoiled his influence. So is it with a hasty temper, or a proud manner, or a tendency to find fault. How many would be grandly useful but for some wretched impediment! Worldliness runs away with many a man's energies; love of amusement makes great gutters in his time: or fondness for feasts and gilded society robs him of his space for service. With some, political heat runs away with the zeal which should have been spent upon religion, and in other cases sheer folly

and extravagance cause a terrible waste of energy which belonged to the Lord. You see there is fire, and there is light; but something extraneous and mischievous is at work, and it needs to be removed. If this is your case, you may well desire the Lord to snuff you, however painful the operation may be. Depend upon it, we have no life-force to spare, and everything which lessens our consecrated energy is a robbery of God.

*Here is a sputtering candle.** You can light the thing, but it seems to spit at you, and crackle as if in a bad temper. Never mind: it is its pretty way, and it will get over it, and burn comfortably by-and-by. We once had among us a good brother—it is years ago, and he is now beyond our censure—he would always give, and give liberally, too; but he took the money out in grumbling. He thought there were too many appeals; he thought the thing ought to be provided for in another way; he thought—in fact he seemed to be full of discontented thoughts; but he ended up by saying, "There's

* I can give a specimen of it in actual fact, but I do not know how to sketch the sputter on paper.

my share of it. It was a pity, for he was real good. If any of you have the sputtering habit, I would advise you not to spend much pains in cultivating it: it is not pretty, and does not commend a man to those about him. When a candle has been so long in the cellar that it has become thoroughly damp, it is apt to spit and sputter a little; but there is no reason why you and I should keep in the cellar, and be sick of the blues; let us abide in the sunnier side of the house, and then we shall burn and shine with a happy cheerfulness. I hope we are not cut-on-the-cross, nor born like Attila to be "the scourge of mankind." I suppose it needs all sorts of people to make up a world; but the fewer of the grizzling, complaining sort, the better for those who have to live with them. Our sputtering candle has now got over his weakness, for he has burned out his damp bit; and whenever you and I come to a cantankerous half-hour, may we get through it as fast as possible, and keep ourselves to ourselves all the time, that nobody may know that we have been in the sulks. Go into your growlery, and get it over: better still, go into your closet and get it under.

We have seen a courteous contrivance at some tobacco shops for giving a light to passers-by. It may serve as a suggestion to ourselves for far higher purposes. If we know the divine truth, let us be ready to communicate it, and by our winning manner constantly say, "*Take a light.*" Let us be

approachable in reference to spiritual things, and we shall soon have the joy of seeing others taking a light from us. We know people to whom no one would ever speak in the hour of trial; as well might they make a

pillow of a thorn-bush. If people to whom they have never been introduced were to intrude their personal sorrows, they would be looked at with one of those *searchers* which read you from top to toe, and at the same time wither you up. On the other hand, there are faces which are a living advertisement running thus: GOOD ACCOMMODATION FOR MAN AND GRIEF. You are sure of a friend here. Certain persons are like harbours of refuge, to which every vessel will run in distress. When you want to ask your way in the street, you instinctively shun the stuck-up gentleman of importance; and you most readily put the question to the man with the smiling face and the open countenance. In our church we have friends who seem to say to everybody, TAKE A LIGHT: may their number be greatly multiplied!

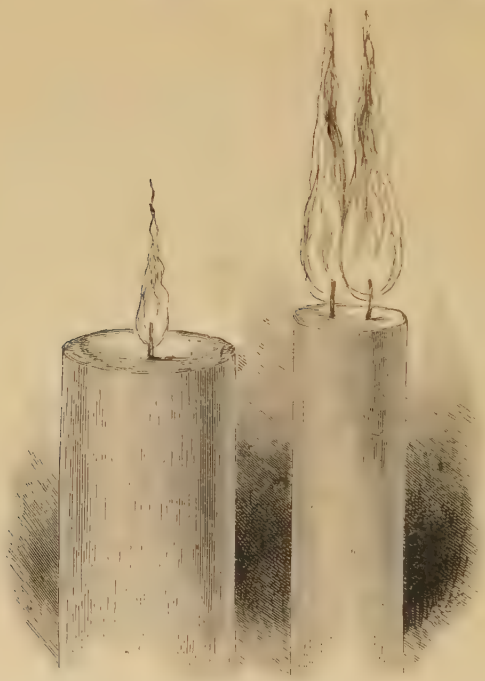
It should be a joy to hold a candle to another. It will not waste our own light to impart it. Yet holding a candle to another has a bitter meaning, as in these lines:—

> "Some say compared to Buononcini
> That Mynheer Handel's but a ninny:
> Others aver that he to Handel
> Is scarcely fit to hold a candle."

This candle is upside down, and it cannot be long before it puts itself out. When in our hearts the lower nature is uppermost, and the animal dominates the spiritual, the flame of holy light cannot be long kept alight. When the world is uppermost, and eternal things have a low place in the heart, the sacred life is in serious jeopardy. When the intellect crushes down the affections, the soul is not in an upright state. It needs that matters be quickly righted, or the worst consequences must ensue. Our prayer should rise to God that this happen not to ourselves; and when we see that it is so with others, we should be full of prayerful concern that they may be turned by the hand of God into a true and upright condition.

Some men who are not quite upright waste much of their influence. To such we might apply the old and almost obsolete word—*candle-waster*. It is a pity to lose life in harmful or unprofitable ways.

Here is a very important-looking candle.



Its dimensions are aldermanic. You expect great things from so portly an illuminator. Look at the size of it. But when I light it, the illuminating power is very small. Can you see any light coming from it? It is a star of the smallest magnitude. We have here the maximum of tallow and the minimum of light.

The fact is, that only a little of the fat just near the centre ever gets melted. This makes a little well of hot grease, but the rest is as hard and cold as if there were no burning wick in the middle. Thus it is with men of more talent than heart: the chief part of them is never used. Many a great and learned minister, with any quantity of Latin and Greek tallow, is but very little useful because his ability is not touched by his heart. He remains cold as to the bulk of him. Many a great, rich man, with any amount of the fat of wealth, never gets warmed through: he is melted to the extent of a shilling or two, but his thousands are unaffected. Partial consecration is a very doubtful thing; and yet how much we have of it! What is wanted is "grace more abundant," to fuse the whole man, and make every part and parcel of him subservient to God's great design of light-giving.

The main business is to have plenty of heart. I have noticed that speakers produce an effect upon their audiences rather in proportion to their hearts than their heads. I was present at a meeting where a truly solid and instructive speaker succeeded in

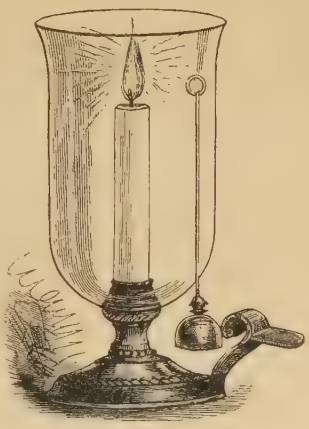
mesmerizing us all, so that in another half minute we should all have been asleep. His talk was as good as gold, and as heavy. He was followed by a gentleman who was "all there", what there was of him. He was so energetic that he broke a chair, and made us all draw in our feet, for fear he should come down upon our corns. How the folks woke up! The galleries cheered him to the echo. I do not know what it was all about, and did not know at the time: but it was very wonderful. An express at sixty miles an hour is nothing to that orator. He swept past us like—well, like nothing at all. He meant it, and we felt that he deserved to be cheered for such zealous intentions. He was all ablaze, and we were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. I do not hold him up as an example, for in warfare we need shot as well as powder; but I could not help seeing that a warm heart and an energetic manner will carry the day, where a cold ponderosity effects nothing. My friend was like the second candle in our wood-cut—the cobbler's candle with two wicks. His blaze was very large in proportion to the material which sustained it.

In our labour to do good we must not let our learning remain cold and useless. *Dr. Manton* was one of the best of preachers, being both instructive and simple. On one occasion, however, he preached before an assembly of the great, and he very naturally used a more learned style than was his wont. He felt greatly rebuked when a poor man plucked him by the gown, and lamented that, whereas he had often been fed under his ministry, there had been nothing for him on that occasion. The fire had not been so fierce as the tallow had been cold. It is a dreadful thing when hearers have more use for a dictionary than for a Bible under a sermon. A preacher may pile books on his head and heart till neither of them can work. Give me rather the enthusiastic Salvationist bearing a burning testimony, than your cultured philosopher prosing with chill propriety.

Here is what your wise aunt in the country used to give you at night when you went down to the old farm-house, and time had come for bed. You said, "Aunt, what is this cage for? Is this a mad candle, that it needs to be thus straitly shut up?" "No", she said, "we have had young people

here who have been so wicked as to read in bed, and you know how dangerous it is. Why, they might set all the bed-curtains alight, and so the house might take fire, and all your uncle's ricks would soon be blazing, and soon the whole village would go like a bunch of matches. So I put the candle in a guard to prevent mischief." Still, after all your aunt's lucid explanation, you did not like the look of this muzzled candle; and I should not wonder if you took it out of its prison, and did a bit of reading by its naked light. Young people are so venturesome! Now, it is very proper to be on your guard, in what you say, and what you do. In all companies it is well to be guarded in your behaviour. But is there not a way of being on your guard without diminishing the light of your cheerfulness? May you not be careful without being suspicious? Here is just as effectual a guard

for a candle as that wire cage; but it is far more bright and attractive. Let your prudence be always mated to your cheerfulness. Be on the watch, but don't look as if you had been drinking a quart of vinegar. Guard against sin, but do not check everything that would make life bright and happy. Don't put out the candle for fear of burning down the house.

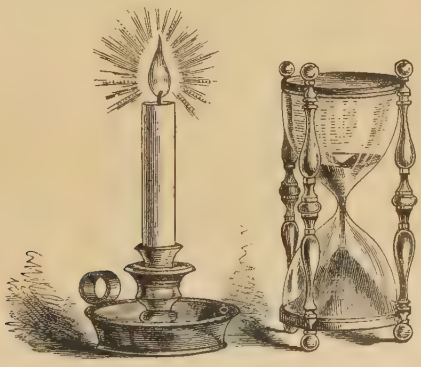


In the matter of being on your guard against impostors who seek your charity, use common-sense but not harshness. I had rather be taken in every now and then than be always suspicious. One does not care to go about in armour all day and all night; one is glad to get his head out of the helmet, and lay it down on a pillow. It may be useful to us to be taken in sometimes, that we may see how weak we are—I mean the shrewdest of us.

This second guard, so pleasant and bright, is my ideal. Here you have care without anxiety, and prudence without gloom. Be it so with us, that with a mortal hatred to all sin, we have a delight in all that is glad, and joyous, and pure.

Here is a candle on a save-all—an invention which is scarcely ever thought of nowadays, in this age of gas and general extravagance. Every prudent housewife had a save-all to burn up the smallest remnant of candle. Economy is necessary for the poor, and salutary for the rich. He who would have much to give away should feel that he has nothing to waste. He who was heard to scold about a wasted match was found to be no miser, but a greater giver than anyone else. Use the save-all to preserve every fragment of time. "Redeeming

the time, because the days are evil." How much can be done in odd minutes! Many instances could be given to prove that it is so. Sanctify odd minutes, odd pence, and all sorts of oddments, and out of them you can bring glory to God.

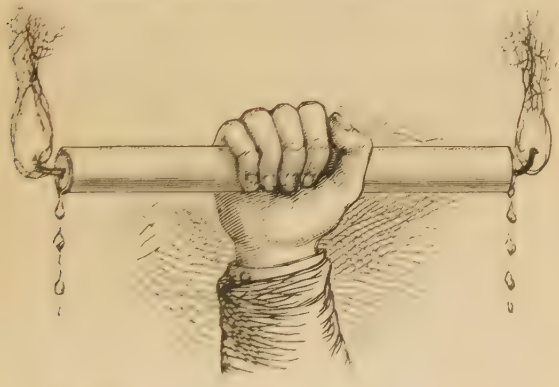


Here is an hour-glass and a candle. As the hour-glass runs, and the candle burns, we mark how the time passes away. In the old Puritan pulpits there used to be an hour-glass, and the preacher was expected to preach as long as the sand of the hour-glass was running; which, of course, was just an hour. A witty preacher, having on one occasion only reached to "Eighteenthly" when the hour-glass had run out, and having thirty heads to dilate upon, turned the machine

over and cried, "Brethren, let us have another glass." When you hear of the length of time that your ancestors gave to hearing discourses, be ashamed at the grumbling about long sermons, and do try to take in every scrap of the poor pennyworth which we are allowed to give you in three poor quarters of an hour. Whether we preach, or hear, time is hastening on Our sands of life will soon run out. Just as we are being borne along irresistibly every moment as the earth speeds in her orbit, so are we being carried away by the resistless course of time. How it flies to a man of middle age! How exceedingly fast to the aged! We may say of the hours, as of the cherubim, "each one had six wings." If everything is made secure by faith in the Lord Jesus, we need not wish it to be otherwise; for the faster time passes, the sooner shall we be at home with our Father and our God.

We feel, as we watch the decreasing candle and the falling sand, that *we*, at least, have no time which needs killing. What we have is all too little for our high and holy purposes. We want not cards, and dice, and scenic displays for a pastime: our time passes all too

rapidly without such aids. Those who kill time will soon find that time kills them, and they would gladly give worlds, if they had them, to win back a single hour. Remember the story of Queen Elizabeth's last moments, and take care to spend each hour as carefully as if you had no other hour to follow it.



The next illustration is a warning, and not an example. You have often heard it said of such and such a person, "he is burning the candle at both ends." Spendthrifts waste both capital and interest; and by both neglecting business and wasting their substance on expensive pleasures, they burn the candle at both ends. The vicious not only exhaust their daily strength, but they draw

upon the future of their constitutions, so that when a few years have gone they are old men before their time. Beware of burning the candle at both ends. It will go fast enough if you burn it only at one end; for your stock of strength and life is very limited. If there is anyone here who is sinning on the right hand and on the left, let him forbear, and not be in such fearful haste to endless ruin. Let this candle cast a light upon the folly of prodigality, and may the prodigal hasten home before his candle is burned out. Did you ever see a candle used in that way? You do not live with folks so mad; but if you look abroad in the wide world, you may see how thousands are squandered and lives are cut short by burning the candle at both ends.

Some good people are unreasonable towards ministers and evangelists, and want them to be worked to death. Many a valuable man of God has been lost to the church by his burning his candle at both ends.

This candle has fallen upon evil times. I have a bottle here full of a black material, which is to fall upon the flame of this candle.

When I tell you that this bottle contains a quantity of steel-filings, you will at once prophesy that the light will be put out.

Let us see what will happen! Why, well, instead of putting the candle out, I am making it disport itself as candle never did before! Here we have fireworks, which, if they do not quite rival those of the Crystal

Palace, have a splendour of their own. Do you not think that often when Satan tries to throw dust upon a Christian by slander, he only makes him shine the brighter. He was bright before, but now he coruscates, and sends forth a glory and a beauty which we could not have expected from him, for it never could have come from him if it had not been for the temptations, trials, and spiritual difficulties with which he has been assailed? God grant that it may be so with us in all time of our tribulation! May we turn the filings of steel into flashes of light!

The next illustration consists of two candles, and I am going to read, if I can, by the light of them. It may have happened to you at home, when you burned candles, that you required two of them. It needed some sense to arrange them if they were of unequal heights. I will place them here in this fashion, and I will sit down to read by their light. I cannot see, for I have put the tall candle in front and the shorter candle behind; the short one is envious, and causes the tall one to cast an injurious shadow over my book. It seemed natural to put the greatest first, but I see that it will not

work. I will put the shorter candle in front, and put the longer one behind. Now I get the light of them both. Here is the

lesson: Always put the weaker brother in the place of honour if you can, and thus make the best use of his light, and prevent his creating a shadow through envy. Notice

the order of marching in the Stockwell Orphanage when the children walk out to worship, or to the Common. The rule is,

that the smallest boys and girls shall lead the way. In the old method the taller children blocked up the vision of the little ones, and also went along at a pace too great for the juniors; but on our plan the taller boys can see over the heads of the shorter ones, and the pace is toned down to suit little feet.

This is a suggestive rule for the young, and I trust that we who are older will not depart from it. Church members should make this the law of precedence in the house of the Lord, *weaker brethren first considered.* Let us not go our own pace, but consider their weakness, lest we cause any one of them to stumble. He that has only a little property, a little talent, a little position, and a little grace, must be first thought of. It is not ours to strive for the first places, but in honour to prefer one another, looking more to the benefit of the whole body than to our own comfort or honour.

We will conclude as they do at open-air entertainments—with the greatest display of our fireworks.

Here are many candles uniting their brilliance; they all hang upon one support, and

shine by the same light. May they not represent the church of Christ in its multiplicity,

variety, and unity? These candles are all supported upon one stem, they are all giving forth the same light, and yet they are of all manner of sorts, sizes, and colours. A great way off they would seem to be but one light. They are many, and yet but one. I happened one evening to say that nobody could tell which was the "U.P.", and which was the Free Church, or which was the Wesleyan, or

the Primitive, or the Salvation Army, or the Baptists, and so on; but one strong old Baptist assured me that the "Dips" gave the best light. Another said the Presbyterians were, on the whole, cast in the best mould; and a third thought the English Church was made of the truest wax. I told them that some of the Baptists would be the better if they had another Baptism. The Free Churches might be none the worse for being more established in the faith; and even the Methodists might improve their methods. The main question is possession of the one light and fire of God, the flame of divine truth. Those who shine by divine grace are all one in Christ Jesus.

What a glory will there be in the one church when all her members shine, and all are one! May such a day come quickly! Amen.

Have I not proved that a world of illustration may be found in a candle?

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